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**THE SUNDAY SCHOOL IN THE  
MODERN WORLD**



# THE SUNDAY SCHOOL IN THE MODERN WORLD

EDITED BY

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IN COLLABORATION WITH

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WORLD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL CONVENTION

AND

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VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

WITH A FOREWORD BY

THE MOST HON.

**THE MARQUIS OF ABERDEEN AND TEMAIR, K.T.**

PRESIDENT OF THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL SABBATH SCHOOL UNION

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## Foreword

“A world in ferment.”

“The demon of Europe’s unrest.”

“The times are out of joint.”

Such are some of the utterances which have been evoked, and with reason, by the conditions which have prevailed during recent years.

And “There be many that say, ‘Who will show us any good?’”

To that despondent question, the sublime answer, instantly sounded forth by the Psalmist, has been accepted and endorsed by millions of devout hearts through all the centuries that have rolled on since it was uttered :

“LORD, LIFT THOU UP THE LIGHT OF THY COUNTENANCE UPON US.”

For it is not only a prayer, but also the declaration, the affirmation, that only from the *Source* of all good, can true good be derived.

There have been various earnest and inspiring Conferences, where this truth has been recognised and proclaimed, with the further aim of promoting the application thereof, in combined and comprehensive action.



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And is there not a grand opportunity and a clamant call for such action, in the reinforcement and extension of that great engine of influence, the Sunday School ?

It is admitted, indeed it is obvious, that the hope of the future depends upon whether the rising generation will enter upon the vast work of reconstruction in the right spirit.

And we are on the eve of an event which will furnish a magnificent occasion for a great rally towards that attainment, namely the World's Sunday School Convention, to be held in the month of June, this year.

All the previous eight similar Conventions, held in various parts of the world, have been memorable and beneficent ; but this promises to be epochal ; and it surely behoves all who desire to be enrolled under the Christian Banner, to do what we can to ensure that it shall indeed be of epoch-making value.

Immense preparations to this end have been made—all in humble dependence on the Divine Guidance—and therefore we may look forward with confidence to widespread results. One of these, it may be predicted, will be that of enlightenment, still much needed in various quarters, as to the real character and use of Sunday School work. There has been quite a common assumption that Sunday Schools and

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Sunday School teachers do not represent a strong and virile element in religious enterprise—and this tradition (of course sedulously nurtured by the Enemy) has prevailed, in spite of conspicuous examples of learning, and (what would appeal even more to not a few) successful business capacity, on the part of prominent individuals concerned in Sunday School work—in fact of robustness combined with spirituality.

And such a remark inevitably calls to mind the name and personality of the late Mr. John Wanamaker, the veteran President of the American Sunday School Union, to whose visible presence at the Convention many of us had looked forward, as giving an opportunity of offering a peculiar welcome, and genuine homage.

The Convention will also be a great object lesson and practical exposition of the true international spirit.

But these reflections form in one sense a digression; for the present volume is not intended primarily as a Handbook for the Convention (though it cannot fail to be an acceptable companion), but rather as a permanent contribution to the literature of the subject, to be available everywhere, as a stimulating, instructing, and guiding influence in the sacred work with which it deals.

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The book is the best product of earnest and devout hearts and cultured intellect ; and it is now sent forth on its voyage, with the dedication and invocation :

“ O LORD, SEND NOW PROSPERITY.”

ABERDEEN AND TEMAIR,  
*President, Scottish National  
Sabbath School Union.*

*March, 1924.*

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## Editor's Introduction

D. P. THOMSON, M.A.

AMONG the many notable achievements our age has to its credit in the realm of intellectual and moral advance none is more significant, or likely to be more far reaching in its results, than the discovery and recognition of child life and of the possibilities of the child mind. The boys and girls of to-day enjoy the interest, and receive the sympathetic attention, of the most thoughtful and most cultured minds in a way that would have seemed incredible even a generation or two ago. Psychology, the youngest and most aggressive of our Sciences, continues to make a speciality of the study of the child, and the number of investigators in this field tends to increase year by year. Hereditary and environmental influences are studied, tendencies of the unfolding life explored, and possibilities of the formative years discussed, with all the enthusiasm and wholeheartedness of the pioneer. The Child is "in the midst" to-day in a way he never was before.

While it is too early fully to appraise results in the field of Child Psychology, and while much remains to be done before the voice of Science can



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speaking with authority on every aspect of the subject, it is unquestionably true that a flood of light has been thrown on the unfolding of life, and on the growth and development alike of mind and of character. In the light of recent discoveries educational methods have been largely revolutionised and educational standards readjusted, while the whole attitude of seriously minded men and women to the problem of child training has been altered.

All this has reacted most markedly on the Church. The time is not so far distant when any building or plant, and any kind of teacher, however incompetent or poorly equipped, was considered good enough for the Sunday School. That attitude is rapidly passing, if it has not altogether passed. The Sunday School is no longer regarded as a useful—and perhaps necessary—adjunct to the life and work of the Church. It has come to be recognised as an integral and all important part of a living spiritual community. Old ideas may not have entirely disappeared, and old methods may be proving as hard to break with as ever, but there is a spirit of enquiry abroad, and a new and quickened interest in Sunday School work. There is a general recognition of the fact that spiritual vitality and enthusiasm must be reinforced by scientific training, and by careful and systematic study, on the part of those who would minister

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to the rising generation in the service of Jesus Christ.

This interest is likely to be quickened, at least so far as our own country is concerned, by the approaching World's Sunday School Convention to be held in Glasgow in June of this year, at which representatives of the Churches of two hemispheres will gather to discuss the problems of religious education and training. The present is therefore deemed a specially appropriate time for the publication of such a book as this, and it is sent out as a small contribution to a subject of growing interest and importance.

This volume embodies the accumulated experience of years of pioneer work in the field of Christian education. Its writers trace the origin and development of the Sunday School, discuss its fourfold function—as an educative and evangelistic agency, as a school of Christian character, and a training ground for Christian service—and indicate how modern educational principles can best be applied to its work. The most up-to-date methods of grading come under review, considerable space being devoted to the work of the various departments. The pressing problems of decreased attendance, inefficient staffing, and inadequate adjustment to the life and work of the Church, are sympathetically and suggestively treated by men whose experience

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qualifies them to speak. Each writer has been left free to deal with his subject in his own way, and the result is a volume of singular interest and value, not only for the Sunday School leader and teacher, but for the general reader. The Bibliography at the end will be found useful by those who wish to pursue the study further.

I am deeply indebted to Mr. James Kelly and Mr. Carey Bonner, who have so generously collaborated with me in this task, placing at my disposal their unrivalled knowledge of Sunday School work. That men whose energies are so engaged, and whose time is so fully occupied as theirs, should have given themselves so ungrudgingly to this work is further and happy evidence of the spirit that exists among the pioneers of Christian education to-day. I should also like to express my gratitude to Mr. Ernest H. Hayes, without whose encouragement this book might never have been attempted, and by whose help it has been very greatly enriched.

## CHAPTER I

### The Origin of the Sunday School

By W. MELVILLE HARRIS, M.A.

Old events have modern meanings ;  
Only that survives  
Of past history which finds kindred  
In all hearts and lives.

LOWELL.

#### FORCES RELEASED BY THE GREAT REVIVAL.

THE cry of the militia on the coming of William of Orange to these shores, "A free Parliament and the Protestant religion," was the herald of forces that changed the face of England. It worked the soil in readiness to receive the seed of a later day. Albeit the Revolution of 1688 gave greater liberty to men, it did not free the child from thralldom. No steps were taken to fit him for his wider inheritance. He was accorded no assured or recognised place. Seeds full of promise were the outcome but they awaited the touch of life.

Freedom without moral enthusiasm is of little value. In the England of the earlier decades of

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the eighteenth century religion was a decaying force. Few new churches were built, of schools there were practically none. The rich sneered at religion, the peasantry were being reduced to pauperism, the mass of the population were ignorant and brutal to the last degree. Into this mass was wafted the breath of life, causing the seed sown in the soil prepared at the Revolution to germinate. The human channels through which it came were John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield.

In the middle classes piety was not dead and these men fanned it into fresh life, the fire in turn catching the mass of the people.

John Richard Green, the historian, says : "In the nation at large appeared a new moral enthusiasm . . . whose power was seen in the disappearance of the profligacy which had disgraced the upper classes, and the foulness which had infected literature, ever since the Restoration. But the noblest result of the religious revival was the steady attempt, which has never ceased from that day to this, to remedy the guilt, the ignorance, the physical suffering, the social degradation of the profligate and the poor."<sup>x</sup> The Revival was the cause and forerunner of the philanthropic movements which marked the closing years of the eighteenth century.

<sup>x</sup> *A Short History of the English People*, p. 721.

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### THE CHILD SEEN BUT NOT HEARD.

The Revival effected the restoration of ruins. It also gave birth to a greater idea, that we should aim at the prevention of ruins. That "children should be seen but not heard" was looked upon as a wise saw within living memory. Although the saying savours of age, *that* does not endow it with wisdom. Whether the saw was wise or otherwise, children in the middle of the eighteenth century were not only unheard but as regards their well-being unseen as well.

It was our proud boast that through the industrial revolution of the eighteenth century we became the workshop of the world. Family life was changed; from being rural it became urban. Children were discovered to have a certain economic value. They were exploited in coal mine and mill, and robbed of their tender years for gain. When coarsened and broken they were thrown on the human scrap-heap, neglected and forgotten. The potential wealth of the nation was ruthlessly wasted. It was not then realised that the child was "father to the man" and that what manhood was to be depended upon what childhood had been. The child with his infinite possibilities was unseen, and being unseen, his cry was unheard.

Mrs. Browning had not then voiced "The Cry of the Children":

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Do you hear the children weeping, O my brothers,  
Ere the sorrow comes with years ?

But the young, young children, O my brothers,  
They are weeping bitterly !  
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,  
In the country of the free.

## CHILD-LIFE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Pictures presented by serious writers show poignantly what was the result of the unseeing eye and the deaf ear in the era of modern industrial expansion. In the vernacular of Gloucestershire, "the children were terrible bad." They fought each other like demons. "They were liars and thieves and indescribably dirty and unkempt. Property was insecure because of their depredations, and they infested the streets and made them hideous with their curses. In a word, they were the young Ishmaelites of our land whose hand was against every man, and every man's hand seemed against them."

The youth of our land were more sinned against than sinning, being half-starved, badly housed, ill cared for. More attention was then paid to the feeding and housing of cattle than of children. They were made to keep their distance from the well-clothed and well-fed citizens who deemed themselves of another race. The children of the lower class were looked upon only as food for the gallows, and this they became in

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large numbers, since for petty theft and trivial offences there was then but one cure—that of hanging.

In the earliest Sunday Schools there were, in consequence, masses of children low and degraded, ragged and dirty, shoeless and shirtless, who brought with them the discomforts that arise from “a limited supply of soap and water, and the extreme rarity of washing days.”

Such children soon became, we are told, “clean, quiet, observant of order, submissive, courteous in behaviour and conversation, and free from that vileness which marks our wretched vulgar.” The saintly Fletcher, of Madeley, who established six schools, found that soon after he had done so there was “not only an outward reformation, even of many who had been notorious for all manner of wickedness, but an inward also, many, both young and old, having learned to worship God in spirit and in truth.”

### PIONEERS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL MOVEMENT.

By common consent the honour of giving that impulse to the modern Sunday School Movement which has so altered the outlook of childhood, belongs to Robert Raikes. There are, however, men and women whose names should not be forgotten while that of Raikes is remembered. They too made similar endeavours to



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save from worse than degradation the youth of our land.

Many places in the United Kingdom claim to have had a Sunday School prior to that of Gloucester. Tradition says that Robert Raikes conceived the idea of saving the children through a woman who met him in St. Catherine's Meadows, and pointed to a crowd of idle ragamuffins and suggested what an opportunity they afforded for instruction and guidance. Robert Raikes is also said to have noticed with interest the attempts of a dissenter, William King, of Dursley in Gloucestershire, who gathered the children together on Sunday in order to teach them.

In yet earlier days Cardinal Borromeo in Italy (1538-84), a Roman Catholic of saintly and humble life, established colleges, schools and asylums for destitute children, and initiated their instruction in religion on Sunday. Martin Luther at the Reformation opened schools on Sunday for children. John Knox did the same in Scotland. In the Netherlands as early as 1608 we find Sunday Schools in existence.

In England Joseph Alleine (1634-68), a Nonconformist divine, born at Devizes, when minister at Taunton, set up classes in which he gathered the children of the neighbourhood on Sunday. Richard Baxter (1615-91), when a young man of nineteen, formed and

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taught a class of children on Sunday. Theophilus Lindsay and Hannah Ball made similar endeavours before Raikes aroused a general enthusiasm on behalf of the youth of the land.

In many localities up and down the country the claim is made of having initiated such teaching. This was undoubtedly the case, and in seeking for the origin of the modern Sunday School movement tribute is due to many an unknown man and woman, who in various places saw and tried to repair the ravages made by a neglect of "the years of opportunity."

Robert Raikes deserves the special recognition accorded him because he visualised what had become an imperative need. He also possessed the energy and enthusiasm that wins him due place as the starting point of a *general movement*, destined to become immediately active, and of untold value to the social and spiritual life of the United Kingdom.

Raikes found a ready helper in the Rev. Thomas Stock, of St. John's Parish, Gloucester, who had previously attempted a Sunday School at Ashbury in Berkshire. They gathered the children from six to fourteen years of age and paid women a shilling per Sunday to teach them reading and the Church Catechism. "All I require of the scholars," said Raikes, "are clean hands, clean faces, and combed hair."

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Thomas Stock drew up the first rules that regulated the movement.

It would be an unworthy and unnecessary task to appraise the merit due to Raikes and Stock respectively. The important point is that Robert Raikes, through his paper, the *Gloucester Journal* in 1783, and in the *Gentleman's Magazine* the following year, first drew general attention to the need. In thus gaining the ear of the public and seizing people's imagination the movement ceased to be isolated and sporadic. It quickly spread and became universal.

### RAIKES' BIRTHPLACE.

The city of Gloucester lays rightful claim to be the birthplace of Robert Raikes, the date of his birth, 1735, being generally accepted, although there is reason to believe it may have been a year later, as the entry in the Register of Baptisms of the Church of St. Mary de Crypt reads, "Sep. 24, 1736, Robert, son of Robert and Mary Raikes of this parish." Baptisms then generally followed closely upon birth. Similarly it is uncertain in which house he was born, but probably it was in premises adjoining the Swan Inn. Little is known of the lad's early life and school-days. Tradition has it that he spent some time at the University of Cambridge, but there is no record in the college books of his having done so.

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As the eldest son of a numerous family he engaged in his father's business of printer, and at the early age of twenty-one had the whole care of it on his shoulders, owing to his father's death.

He did not marry until he was thirty-one. His wife was Anne Triggs, who came of a distinguished Gloucestershire family. As his children gathered about him there developed those large sympathies for poor prisoners and neglected children with which Raikes' name is so honourably associated.

### RAIKES THE MAN.

A title by which Raikes became known in after years was that of "the man of Gloucester." Although born in Gloucester, he claimed Yorkshire ancestors, and from them Raikes inherited a shrewdness and honesty that marked the conduct of his influential paper.

But he was more than a man of probity and keen business ability. He possessed a disposition "quick to feel another's woe," quick to seek a remedy for it, and a greatness of heart that expended itself upon the weakest. He had the supreme gift of drawing children to him by an irresistible charm and of winning his way in their affections.

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## **HIS WORK AND INFLUENCE.**

The large-hearted sympathy which had the power to attract children, however degraded they were, gives the key to the lifework with which his name is associated. His ambition was to plant Sunday Schools throughout the length and breadth of England. No one had before been filled with so comprehensive and unique a desire. His efforts to achieve this aim were steady and persistent and his advocacy constant. His enthusiasm, finding vent through his journal, caught the ear of the religious world and so won for the Sunday School its place as a part of the Church's work.

Raikes' first school was started in 1780 in Soot or Sooty Alley, one of the worst districts in the city of Gloucester. It was placed under the superintendency of a Mrs. Meredith. The children who gathered in it were of the most degraded type, and so the Sunday School was begun among those whose need was greatest. Even before this attempt Raikes had gathered some children together after early morning service in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral. The school which first took permanent form was, however, carried on in the Grey Friars, facing St. Mary de Crypt Church. Mrs. Mary Critchley, chosen as its mistress, proved herself capable of managing the children, although those who came "were the

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very lowest kind that could be found." Apparently only boys were admitted at first, but later as the movement spread girls were also welcomed.

In his regard for children Raikes was undoubtedly in advance of the times in which he lived. He often marched through the streets of Gloucester with his "ragged regiment"; taught and sometimes punished the naughty members. He was especially stern with those who told lies. "Look," said he, "a thief is better than a man who is accustomed to lying."

Robert Raikes (1735-1811) lived for thirty years after opening his first Sunday School, long enough to see the acorn develop into a sturdy oak. John Wesley, seeing Sunday Schools springing up on every hand, said, "this is one of the best institutions which has been seen in Europe for many centuries." So it has proved, not only in the eyes of those who watched the early growth, but in the experience of well nigh a century and a half. Raikes' claim to a place on the roll of fame is that he discovered the child—his winsomeness and his possibilities—and with untiring zeal made his discovery known to the world.

### ADVENT OF THE VOLUNTARY TEACHER.

Until about the year 1810 teachers were generally paid—a miserable pittance it is true—but in that year difficulties arose in Gloucester

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with regard to their maintenance. In consequence seven men came forward there to carry Sunday Schools on gratuitously. Oldham, however, is thought to have led the way in voluntary teaching at an even earlier date. Be that as it may, from whatever quarter the example sprang, it spread with rapidity and the paid teacher disappeared. As a result men and women came forward from among people of leisure, filled with love and zeal for the uplifting of child life. The schools established soon ceased to be filled with the poor and ragged alone. They were seen to be the need, not merely of a class, but of children of all ranks in life.

### **THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AND THE CHURCH.**

Sunday Schools were at first the product of individual effort rather than of collective action. They were regarded as a vital addition to the work of the Church, or otherwise, according to the attitude taken by those in authority as to the importance of this new development of Christian activity.

As the old trust deeds of some Churches bear witness, occasionally their attitude in the earlier years of the movement was actually hostile. Generally, however, the Churches warmly welcomed the work commenced by a few devoted men and women, as an enterprise that would prove of the utmost value to religion and the nation. As a

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result well nigh every Church in a comparatively short time had a Sunday School attached to it. Notwithstanding this, in some cases the Sunday School grew up in large measure apart from the life of the Church, although mainly relying upon its adherents for its supply of teachers and for financial support. The passing of the years brought into closer touch the agencies of Church and school, so needful to each other. Efforts were made on every hand to erect school buildings in connection with the Church, and the scholars who filled them were more and more children of the Church-going population.

### FORMATION OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

As we have seen, the earlier schools were necessarily isolated, the outcome of individual enthusiasm and with no common ideal. In 1803 a young teacher living in Walworth, then a village, gathered a few fellow teachers together to talk over the problems that faced them. From this conference sprang the idea of a union of Sunday Schools, to encourage the starting of new schools and to improve those that already existed. This infant organisation, by giving cohesion and direction to scattered efforts, encouraged the growth of schools on every hand. Before the birth of the Union one school was considered sufficient for a district, but after that individual



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Churches awakened to the value of a Sunday School of their own.

## **THE VALUE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.**

The value of co-operation among the various schools was quickly seen in the issue of a "Select List of Scriptures designed as a guide to Teachers" a forerunner of the "International and Graded Lessons." In due course there followed classes for the training of teachers, examinations for teachers and scholars, and all the varied activities which we associate with the National Union to-day. One would fain enlarge on the beneficence of the activities of the Union in widening the scope of the Sunday School Movement, and in directing teachers to the highest interest of the child, but space forbids.

## **GROWTH OF THE MOVEMENT.**

Figures are of little value in gauging the spiritual significance of a movement such as the establishment of Sunday Schools, but they afford indications of growth. In 1789, when Thomas Charles of Bala commenced the first Sunday School in Wales, it was computed that there were already 300,000 scholars gathered in English schools. These had become about half-a-million in 1818. By 1851 the half million had become two and a half millions. At the centenary

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gatherings held in 1880, the number of scholars in Great Britain was returned at 6,695,399, with a body of 704,286 teachers. Sunday School scholars throughout the world then numbered 12,107,312, with 1,425,233 teachers.

This brief survey of the origin of a movement which gave back to childhood the joy of which it had been robbed, and hope for the future; which called forth service and sacrifice, saintliness and statesmanship, should inspire with fresh courage. Let us, therefore, give heed to the words of the prophet, "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt spread abroad on the right hand and on the left."

## CHAPTER II

# The Modern Development of the Sunday School

By CAREY BONNER

TAKING the word "modern" as covering the period from 1900 up to the present time, there can be no doubt that the chief development of the Sunday School has sprung from the introduction of the principle of grading in its three-fold application, namely: the grading (*a*) of scholars according to ages and characteristics; (*b*) of Lesson Material to suit the varying capacities of the Scholars; (*c*) of the Method of Teaching.

### GRADING.

In the closing decade of the last century grading had been successfully carried out in the Sunday Schools of the United States and Canada. The honour of introducing it into Britain belongs to Mr. George Hamilton Archibald, who came from Canada to London in 1902. The National Sunday School Union was the medium of its introduction, as for several years Mr. Archibald acted as Extension Lecturer of the Union,

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conducting Lecture-Conferences in many towns and districts covered by its 320 affiliated organisations. In 1910, Miss Emily Huntley was associated with him as an Extension Lecturer, and largely through their joint advocacy the Movement made steady progress.

### TRAINING COLLEGES.

Soon it became manifest that, for the establishment of the reformed methods, trained leaders were essential, and in 1907 a residential training institution was started at Selly Oak, Birmingham, known as Westhill College. From the outset, the experiment proved an undoubted success. The house generously provided by Mr. and Mrs. Barrow Cadbury soon became too small for the accommodation of the students, and in 1914-15 the present beautiful building was erected, capable of housing 24 students. Session after session it has been full. Indeed, during several terms the number of students entering has made it necessary to use hostels and private houses for sleeping out. A men's hostel has been acquired, and the first term of the present academic year 47 students, men and women, were in residence. A scheme has just been launched for raising upwards of £10,000 for the purpose of building an additional "wing." Mr. Archibald is Principal, assisted by his daughter and a staff of competent

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teachers. The curriculum includes the study of such subjects as Child Psychology, the Bible, Nature, Method in Teaching, etc., the aim being to give a thorough training in the practical side of Sunday School Activities. Special students are also admitted, who desire to take up Kindergarten work on Froebelian principles. A course is offered for Welfare Workers, who can gain the Birmingham University Diploma, and students are trained for the Cambridge Education Certificate. The College is under the guidance of a Committee of representatives appointed by the various denominations and the National Sunday School Union. Since the opening of Westhill 496 students have passed through it, many of whom are now engaged in various towns and districts, at home and abroad, as leaders in the religious education of young people. It is impossible adequately to estimate the value of the contribution made by Mr. Archibald and his helpers to the Sunday School cause through placing the work on true educational lines.

A similar movement has been adopted in the Church of England by the establishment of St. Christopher's College, Blackheath, London, where the Rev. W. Hume Campbell, M.A., is Principal. Here Sunday School leaders receive a course of training like to that given at Westhill. St. Christopher's aims at placing an expert trainer of

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teachers in each diocese of the Church. Of the 38 Dioceses in England, 28 now have a trained leader. Other students are in Districts, Parishes, or in the Mission Fields and the Colonies. Up to the present time 330 students have been sent into the field.

The influence of the graded movement has been far-reaching as it touches every part of the Sunday School.

### LITERATURE.

It has necessitated the issue of many books and pamphlets on subjects such as Child Study, Psychology, Story-telling; detailed plans for the Beginners', Primary, Junior and Intermediate Departments; and a Report of an Inter-denominational Commission dealing with the Senior Department has just been published. (See Bibliography.)

### LESSON COURSES AND NOTES.

In the nineteenth century the plan of a uniform lesson was generally followed in the Sunday Schools of America, Britain, the Overseas Dominions, and in Mission Fields. With the introduction of grading this plan has gradually been superseded by Courses of Lessons adapted to the needs of each Department in the Sunday School. Since 1916 the British Lessons Council

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—composed of members elected by the Denominational Young People's Departments, and other Sunday School bodies—has issued the Standard Graded Courses for Beginners and the Scholars in Primary, Junior, Intermediate, and Senior Departments.<sup>1</sup> Of these Courses the Junior or Intermediate is being used as the Uniform Lesson for Ungraded Schools. Expositions of these lessons, with maps, pictures and other illustrative material, are now published by Interdenominational and Denominational Sunday School Houses in the form of weekly, monthly and quarterly Lesson Notes, as well as in annual volumes covering lessons for twelve months. Large pictures for the schoolroom walls, smaller ones for class use, and still smaller ones—little larger than postage stamps—for the use of individual scholars, are also issued in illustration of the various lessons.

## I.B.R.A.

Both for the graded and uniform lessons valuable help is provided in the shape of skilfully selected Scripture passages for daily reading by teachers and scholars. These passages throw light on the lesson for the following Sunday. The readings most widely used are produced by the International Bible Reading Association, one of

<sup>1</sup> For full particulars see *British Graded Lessons: Their Origin and Scope*, by Rev. Frank Johnson. 4d. Pilgrim Press.

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the Committees of the National Sunday School Union, with hints on the passages and fuller expositions in Dr. Alexander Smellie's "Notes." The daily readings list is printed in 40 languages.

### OTHER COURSES.

The Church of England Sunday School authorities issue Lesson Schemes for their Schools, with explanatory notes. Other courses, with suitable outline lesson notes, are published by the Scottish Churches, and by the Scottish National Sabbath School Union. In Wales the British Lesson Courses are now becoming more and more widely used.

### TRAINING THE TEACHERS.

One of the marked features of the Sunday School movement during the opening years of the new century has been a growing recognition of the fact already mentioned, that trained leaders must be found if the Sunday School is to become truly an instrument of Religious Education. Westhill and St. Christopher's Colleges are helping to provide such leaders, whose main task in the districts where they labour is to give direction in training teachers for the individual Schools.

This process of training is made practicable and effective by Grading; for, when the plan is rightly carried out, each Primary and Junior Department has its own Weekly Training Class,



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where the young helpers are grounded in the elements of Bible Study, Child Study, Story-telling, Lesson-building and related topics, with constant practical application of principles in the actual work of teaching. In like fashion, teachers in the Intermediate and Senior Departments continue the training by their Study Circles and Conferences week by week.

The good work is aided by the National Committee of Graded Workers Associations in connection with the National Union. This Committee assists in forming local Associations of the Graded workers connected with the various Schools in a given town or district; such Association having regular Conferences, Lectures, and Demonstrations, all designed to increase the efficiency of the teaching in the separate Schools.

The extent of this work in England alone may be judged by the progress made by Schools of method held during Eastertide, opening on the Thursday evening before Good Friday and closing on Easter Tuesday morning. Departmental leaders and workers attend from all parts of the kingdom. To quote five instances—in the Easter of the present year, 1924, there have been approximately 300 students at The Hayes, Swanwick (organised by Westhill authorities); 60 at Westhill (dealing with work among boys); 150 at Westminster College (in connection with

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the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Department); and similar numbers at Blackpool and Barnsley—arranged respectively by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Federations of Sunday School Unions. There are, as well, various Summer Schools of Method arranged during July and August, lasting a week or a fortnight.

When it is remembered that each student, in addition to travelling expenses, also pays a fee of about £2 10s. for board, lodging and lectures, it is manifest that these workers are really moved by an earnest purpose to become more efficient in service for Christ among the young people.

At other seasons of the year, Training Courses are promoted by many Interdenominational Unions in different parts of the country, and Denominational efforts in the same direction are making steady advance.

### WORSHIP.

Another notable sign of progress in modern days has been the serious endeavour to make worship a living reality in the Sunday Schools. Generally, the aim has been to uplift the character of the words and music employed. Then, as sincerity is an essential in worship, care has been taken to use hymns that can be sung "with understanding" by the scholars. Purely theological hymns that do not touch the character

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and conduct of children, or hymns that express the matured experience of adults rather than the thoughts and aspirations of a child, have been avoided, and hymns, joyous in spirit, dealing with the elements of a child's religion, or with the youth's living out the truths of religion in action and service have been substituted.

The pioneer collection of this type was "The Sunday School Hymnary," issued in 1905, containing over 600 hymns and tunes, covering all phases of Sunday School life and labour. It was the first graded hymn book published, and the fact that its sales have exceeded three millions is sufficient to show that it met present day needs. It was followed by two volumes of "Child Songs" especially for younger scholars in the Primary and Junior Departments. Later, "The Methodist School Hymnal," the Church of England "Graded School Hymn Book," "School Praise" for Presbyterian Schools, and other smaller collections appeared; all designed to aid genuine worship among children and young people. At the present moment two new books of worship are in preparation, one for Church of England and the other for Congregational Sunday Schools.

Much emphasis is laid upon the need for creating a truly spiritual "atmosphere" in worship. Naturally, the work begins with the Primary Department, and then is continued in the higher

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grades. Greater attention is being given to the training of the scholars in prayer, by the concerted repetition either of brief Scripture passages of adoration, praise, and petition, or of single verses chosen from hymns or expressly written as aids to praise and prayer.

Mention must also be made of the increasing use of the "Eisteddfod" by local Unions. A chief feature of this scheme is the endeavour to awaken and foster a love of what is best in poetry and music by promoting the reciting of good poems, and the singing of solos, anthems, and part-songs, that will enable Sunday School choirs to become familiar with a type of music higher than that of the Psalm tune.

### FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The essential missionary character of the Christian religion is being brought home to the consciousness of Sunday Scholars by the regular inclusion of sets of "Missionary Lessons" in the British Lesson Courses, and by the publication of finely prepared Handbooks dealing with the lives of Missionary Heroes and Heroines, and with stories and "Yarns" of the Mission Field. This is one of the most remarkable and valuable of modern developments. If the Sunday School is to hold its own, it must become more and more a training place for service; and nothing will more

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effectively help towards this desired end than our making the scholars to realise that God did not cease to live and act when the Bible was written ; but that in the records of missionary efforts we find new chapters in a modern “ Book of the ‘ Acts of the Apostles ’ ” whom He has inspired and sent forth to do His will. Rightly used, these instances may prove to be splendid challenges to the scholars that they too shall enroll themselves as “ Heralds of Christ’s Cross.”

### DENOMINATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

The plea that the Churches as such should recognise the vital value of the Sunday School has been persistently and earnestly advanced for more than a hundred years, by the Sunday School people who had banded themselves together—first in “The Sunday School Society,” then, later, in “The National Sunday School Union” and the “Scottish National Sabbath School Union.” During the last half-century there were evident signs that the plea was being heeded, and a significant fact in the Sunday School history of the last twenty years has been the growing strength of “Sunday School and Young People’s Departments” in the different Churches. Through these Departments each Church is now actively engaged in “campaigns” and “forward movements” designed to increase the efficiency

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of the Sunday School and kindred Young People's Organisations. During the last two years what was known as "The United Board of Sunday School Organisations" has been reconstituted. Representatives of the Church of England have been appointed to serve upon it, and the Board now consists of representative members from the Church of England, Wesleyan Methodist, Congregational, Baptist, Primitive Methodist, United Methodist, Presbyterian, Independent Methodist, Wesleyan Reform, Society of Friends, New Church and Moravian Denominations, and from St. Christopher's and Westhill Training Colleges and the National Sunday School Union. The United Board meets for mutual Conference upon Sunday School problems, and aims at promoting a common policy and unity of effort among the various Sunday School organisations. Through the Board the members are able to take united action in great moral and religious matters affecting the well-being of the young folk in the Sunday Schools.

In Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, a like advance has been made in the activities of the Denominations on behalf of the Sunday scholars and the youth of the Churches and congregations. So, in Great Britain generally, one of the most hopeful signs of the times is a growing purpose of the Churches to make the work among young people central in importance.

## CHAPTER III

### The Place of the Sunday School in the Modern World

By A. E. GARVIE, M.A., D.D.

(I) THERE are two features of the world as it is to-day which bear very directly and potently on the religious training of the child.

(i.) It was assumed that in the *home* religious training could best be given. And there were many Christian homes where much care was given to bringing up children in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord." We cannot adequately appreciate how much of the best in Christian men and women could be traced to the instruction and influence of Christian fathers and especially mothers. There were, however, many homes, nominally Christian, where that duty was altogether neglected, or very carelessly performed. Then, as now, in a great multitude of homes, no Christian profession at all was made. Whether that training, when given, was always by the best methods of instruction and influence is another question; but at least it was given. Doubtless

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there are still many homes where Christian parents recognise their obligations to their children to lead them to a good and a godly life ; but it is not a misrepresentation of our own age to say that even genuinely Christian parents are either less conscious of the need, because trusting other agencies to discharge their duties for them, or more conscious of their inability to discharge this duty, because aware in a small measure at least of the dangers of using wrong methods. At a Conference on Religious Education which I attended recently a headmaster and a headmistress both testified that there was a tendency among parents more and more to relieve themselves of their responsibilities in this respect, in the expectation that the school would and could take the place of the home. Parents whose religious profession is nominal are still less likely to recognise their obligations. We must face the fact that the new economic and social situation is tending to break up the home. There is a movement towards premature independence of boys and girls ; and parents seem less able or willing to maintain their influence. Tyranny in the home should cease, but authority needs to be maintained, if the home is fitly to discharge its function as "a cure of souls." We must not indulge in vain lamentations that things are not as they were. We must recognise things as they



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are, and act accordingly to try and make them better.

(ii.) There are many functions which at one time were discharged or largely controlled by the Church which have now altogether passed under the supervision of the State. In poor relief as well as in education the Church was the pioneer, but in both the State has supplanted it. Whether, if the resources of the Church had been adequate, it would have been better that the change had not been made it is needless to discuss. But in both respects a problem has emerged. The Church's care of the poor might have been kindlier than official charity with the best intentions has proved. Education under the control of the State cannot be as fully religious as the Church might have kept it.

(a) Those who, because of the difficulties which sectarian divisions in the Church involve, cut the Gordian Knot by declaring that the State has nothing to do with religion, and who, therefore, advocate either what is called secular education—that is, education with no religious instruction at all—or a minimum of Bible teaching to ward off the reproach that the education is altogether godless, have thoroughly understood neither the relation between religion and education nor the character of religion. If human personality be by its very nature incomplete without

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religion, the conscious, voluntary relation to God, then no education is adequate that does not include religion. And if religion be not a department of life, separable from other departments, but a quality of all life, the relation to God determining all other relations, then the State cannot divide with the Church the education of the child, reserving for itself all else, and leaving to the Church religion. And, further, if religion is not merely knowledge of the Bible, however valuable that may be as a means towards religion as the end, Scripture teaching which is not given in a religious atmosphere will largely fail of its end.

(b) It may be that, in the present situation, no other course is practicable ; but it is a reproach on the Churches that it is so. If, as regards the education of the child at least, the Churches would forget their "unhappy divisions," and unite in some scheme whereby the religious instruction would be given by religious persons in a religious atmosphere, we should be nearer getting the religious education we need. There are very many teachers who do their best to make the religious instruction even under present conditions effective ; but it is doubtful whether many of them know either the Bible as modern scholarship has disclosed it to us, or the religious disposition of the child as modern educational science is

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coming to understand it. Many teachers have been trained to teach all other subjects except this one, as provision is not made in all training colleges to prepare them adequately for this task, the pressure of other subjects being such that a teacher is tempted to sacrifice the religious teaching to other claims on his time, interest and effort. There are teachers who make no religious profession; and yet are not so conscientious as to seek exemption from this task; and they cannot exercise the influence through the instruction which should be exercised. One admits that it cannot be otherwise, that an Education Authority cannot test a teacher's religious disposition, although it is certainly entitled to be satisfied about his moral character. Appreciating as generously as we can all that the day schools are doing for religious education, the conclusion is forced upon us that to depend on them as on the home would be a disastrous mistake. Where then must we look for the solution of the problem?

(2) It must be admitted that the Sunday School can offer but a very partial solution. For, *first of all*, it does not reach all the children of the nation as does the day-school. *Secondly*, it has not teachers as trained as are the teachers in the day-school. *Thirdly*, it has not the constant and potent influence the home has, for what is an

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hour or an hour-and-a-half a week in comparison with the daily contact of the home? Each of these limitations demands consideration.

(a) Parents who are themselves indifferent to religion are generally willing that their children should attend Sunday School. The Sunday School can be made attractive to the scholars so that they will come voluntarily and not under compulsion. The personality of the teacher counts for a great deal in drawing and holding scholars. The adaptation of the whole service to the interests and the activities of the child will increase the number attending. If there were more cordial co-operation among the churches, even our big towns could be thoroughly canvassed so as to secure the children as scholars. In most places the Sunday Schools are content with keeping the scholars who of their own accord come to them. Visitation of the homes is one of the best methods of both getting and keeping scholars. That all children will be won may seem "a forlorn hope," but what the Sunday Schools should realise is this, that they are responsible to do all in their power to reach all the children in any village, town or city, and to bring them in their earlier years under the influence of Christ as Saviour and Lord.

(b) The number of the scholars will depend in large measure on the *quality* of the teaching.

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Good work has been done by unqualified teachers whose moral character and religious disposition exercised an influence which was no way the result of the instruction which they were able to give. The moral character and religious disposition are essential; but the influence of both will be increased and not decreased by competence in teaching. There are three reasons why the *quality* of the teaching must be improved if the Sunday School is to exert all the influence which is necessary to secure the religious education of the youth of the nation.

(i.) In the day school the scholars get accustomed to methods of instruction adapted to their character and capacity. The teachers have been taught and trained how to teach, to maintain discipline and to deal with different types of children. We should vainly flatter ourselves if we assumed that all the teachers in the day schools were thoroughly competent, for, to our shame, untrained teachers are, for the sake of a false economy, being still employed. But on the whole the teaching here is very much more competent than in the Sunday Schools. An evidence of this is the pleasure that many children now show in going to school. A child, without reasoning about it, is aware when he is being skilfully or unskilfully handled, just as a horse knows whether the reins are in the hands of one

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at home in the saddle or not. And the Sunday Schools will fail unless the children gain that same confidence as regards their teachers.

(ii.) While the elementary schools still provide what is a very modest modicum of knowledge, the range is becoming wider ; and the teacher in the Sunday School should know at least so much more than his scholars as not to show himself ignorant. Where some knowledge of science especially has been acquired, where an enquiring mind has been developed, the task of the teacher in handling the Biblical material is increased in difficulty. If the science has been taught at all as it should have been taught, a sense of the regularity and the uniformity of nature will have been gained, and the teacher of older scholars especially must be on his guard not to provoke doubt instead of promoting faith by his presentation of the truth. He must not teach what will need afterwards to be unlearned, for that will awaken a distrust even of that teaching which was altogether true. There are pious people, and even ministers, whose utterances show that they are asleep intellectually, and not aware at all what is the world of knowledge in which they now live.

(iii.) A study of the Bible by modern methods with modern scholarship will largely remove this difficulty. Teachers must so think and teach as

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not to come into conflict with the assured knowledge of to-day. Those who cling to the older views are forced to regard the wonderful advances of human knowledge and thought of this age as "science falsely so-called," or "vain philosophy." Because they have misunderstood how God taught in the past they cannot learn what God is teaching in the present. In dealing with the young, taught modern knowledge and trained by modern methods, it is of the utmost importance that the Bible should be taught as modern scholarship has disclosed its meaning and worth. So taught the Bible does not come into conflict with the knowledge of to-day, and can guide and guard the life of to-day.

(c) The Sunday School teacher has an advantage over the day school teacher in having a smaller class, and in thus being able to cultivate closer personal relations. His affection, solicitude and sympathy, without becoming sentimental, can give him a hold comparable with that of the home. He will not be content with the brief contact of the school; he will try, when practicable, to secure for some hours during the week in club, or lecture, or some other means, an environment for his scholar's life, congruous with the purpose of the Sunday School, and yet congenial to the scholar. When we realise the surroundings of many scholars, we shall recognise that the Sunday School

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must be more than a Sunday School, and must try by other means to supply the influences that a home, if Christian, should provide.

(3) The demand is great, but it is urgent and imperative. To-day in the realms of economics and politics serious and even menacing problems clamour for solution. How shall the world's peace be maintained? How shall class antagonisms be removed? Christ alone has the solution and He can give it only through Christian citizenship. The scholars of the Sunday School are the future citizens. Their teaching and their training in the Sunday School should fit them for the worthy discharge of that task. What the teacher should aim at, is not an individual pietism, but a manhood or womanhood, cleansed, hallowed and inspired by Christ Himself in every relation, interest and activity. Racial, national and class prejudice needs to be rooted out; a love of mankind, of men of every colour, people and class must be implanted. The world needs most of all the spirit of reconciliation, of God and man, and of men to one another. Courses of lessons are now being provided with this wider vision, more inspiring for youth than the narrower view could be. Thus the Sunday School may serve as one of the most effective agencies for bringing in the Kingdom of God.



## CHAPTER IV

### The Relation of the Sunday School to the Church

By W. M. CLOW, D.D.

THE Christian Church is the Society of believing men, called out of the world, and gathered round Jesus Christ, to carry on His work. That work, in His own terms, is to bring in the kingdom of God among men, so that God's will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven. This Christian Church was at first a small company of men who trusted and loved and served Christ. It has grown in strength and power until it is the only world-wide organisation. Although often torn by dissensions, weakened by divisions, shamed by disloyalties to its Lord and His message, it remains the supreme organisation, known among men, with the sole purpose of calling back God's lost children to the fellowship and service of their heavenly Father.

What is the relationship of the Sunday School to this Church founded by Christ and enlightened by His Spirit? The Sunday School may be

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regarded from one aspect as a department of the Church's service. Or it may be thought of, under a more vital figure, as one of the branches of a living and fruit-bearing tree. We touch the deeper truth, however, and enter more certainly into the mind of Christ, when we think of it as the fold for the lambs of a flock. By that significant figure, so cherished by the Hebrew prophets, and so appealing to every Christian heart through the teaching of Jesus, we have been taught that while there was a fold for the sheep, into which at first the lambs passed in their infancy, the time came when the lambs were gathered into their own fold. So also, in our outwardly different Western world, the Christian flock needs a fold for the young and unlearned, if the commission given to the Church is to be fulfilled.

### I

When we look enquiringly at the relation of this fold, which we call the Sunday School, to the larger fold of the Church, we recognise many features of practical detail. We are confronted by ever-changing problems of efficient management. And we have to answer questions as to relative responsibility and co-operation. The first question concerns the membership of the Sunday School. It is commonly taken for granted that the

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scholars of a Sunday School should be the young people in a Christian congregation of the normal school age. It is held, almost generally, that the children of all the members of the congregation should be found in its classes. Now and again this clear and certain obligation has not been fulfilled, to the incalculable loss of the children. There have been parents who have refused to send their sons and daughters to be taught in the Sunday School. They have withheld them, because they did not wish them to mingle with those of "the common people." They feared lest their speech or their manners should be affected, or their clothing should be soiled, by contact with children from humble homes. Such parents have been taught in later years how severe a penalty was visited upon their children, and upon themselves. It resulted in a stupid pride, a callous and insensible feeling toward the outcast and the poor, a disregard for the public worship of God, and even a ribald contempt for things holy. But most men, with a conscience, are assured that the membership of a Sunday School should include every child who can be invited, persuaded, allured, to pass over its threshold. It is recognised not only as an educational, but also as a missionary agency of the Church. Both in regard to its teaching of the Bible and the truths of the Christian religion,

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and to its power of drawing within its shelter the children of the careless and heedless, it has proved itself to be the most efficient Home Mission agency. Again and again congregations have been founded in succession to a Sunday School, where the children of a neglected district had been gathered by earnest men, and had been trained in the fear of the Lord. There is no more honourable or more inspiring inheritance than to have such a history, and as a rule these Churches inherit also the zeal of these missionary bands who first gathered in the children. To-day, when the Church is faced by so many careless, irreligious and even hostile men and women, saddened so often by their indulgence in base appetites, and spiritually chilled by a freezing materialism, the most hopeful enterprise of the Christian Church is the mission of the Sunday School to the children, and the appeal made to their still unwithered hearts. The Church and its officers should regard with especial interest this organisation with its specific function of seeking out and gathering in the children of the careless.

This question of the membership raises some issues which have never been faced by the Church of our own land. It is usually agreed that every child between five and fourteen years of age should be a scholar in the Sunday School. In

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recent years a new and forward step has been taken whose wisdom has been justified. The age of admission has been lowered, and the skilfully organised Primary Department, where children from three years old to seven are enrolled, has been established. In past years it was assumed, too often without any proof, that their parents taught these younger children. It was only too evident that the ordinary Sunday School had no method, and almost no power of reaching their minds, and of winning their hearts. When, as is too plain to-day, few fathers or mothers sit down to give their children any regular or definite Bible teaching, the Primary Department is an absolute necessity. Every Church, therefore, ought to keep a Cradle Roll, and its officers should be instant and watchful in their care that as soon as these children on the Cradle Roll are able to find their way, they should be enrolled as scholars of the Primary Department.

But the problem of the older scholars—the problem of the adolescent—remains too largely unsolved. Nowhere has the Sunday School, to the heavy grief of its eager-hearted teachers, failed so evidently as in the keeping of the older scholars. It is not often that boys of over fourteen years of age are to be found in the Sunday School. In the United States of America, and in some British Schools, this fact has been

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recognised, and a new idea of the membership of a Sunday School has been conceived. Under this conception the Sunday School is regarded as an agency not only for the religious education of the children and a fold for the lambs, but even more impressively as a Bible School, with scholars of all ages from the boy and girl up to those who form the membership of the Church. How far this is usual, even in the United States, is open to question. The evidence is rather against its universal adoption. There have been some notable schools carried on with this basis of membership, such as those of Henry P. Haven of Waterford, and Mr. John Wanamaker of Philadelphia. But, so far as can be ascertained, most Sunday Schools in America follow the pattern which prevails among ourselves, although they are usually more elastic in their methods, and more eager for fresh and attractive features. The truth seems to be that these great Sunday Schools, which are really Bible Schools sometimes with a membership of two thousand in attendance, of all ages up to three score years and ten, are the creation of some singular and notable personality, who has unique powers of leadership, with such a moral passion as to make the conduct of the school the engrossing work of his life. Yet they do solve this problem, and prove that it is not so difficult as some believe

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to keep the boy and the girl, in the years when they tend to become vagrant in mind and resentful of discipline, within the door of the Sunday School. At the same time the simple fact is, that the members of the modern Church will not yield themselves to the discipline of a Bible School. If only they would make the undoubted sacrifices which are required, the relation between the school and the Church would become more close and more helpful to both. In the meantime the first obligation of the Church is to make every endeavour to place all the children of school age upon the roll of the Sunday School, and to endeavour to further its work in keeping the adolescent under its education and discipline.

## **II**

A second line of obligation for the Church to follow is to give its constant and strengthening support in the practical working of the school. Its first function here is that of oversight. Oversight must be distinguished from control or management. These should be in the hands of the duly appointed officers of the school, working in co-operation with the teachers. A properly organised school should be self-governing in the conduct of its work. But every congregation has eager-minded men and women who love to work among

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the children. Sometimes they have no marked gift of teaching, and again, they are busily engaged in businesses which take them much from home. But, by their sympathy and interest and support, they can express the mind of the whole Church towards the Sunday School. It should be an object on the part of the Church to appoint such men to the Sunday School Committee, and to give them a commission to discharge any office which would lighten the burden of the teachers, and tend to the furtherance of the interest of the school outside and beyond its regular meetings. Beyond this band of especial enthusiasts, the officers of the Church, as an organised body, should encourage the superintendent and his teachers by a most evident support. In their visits to the school, in their endeavours to gather in new scholars, in their willingness to make enquiries about the careless, in their presence and their help on the social occasions of the school, both in summer and in winter, there should be an eager desire and an unflagging devotion which would both gladden and inspire the working staff of the school. Any visit to the school should always be carried out with courtesy, and with deference to the superintendent, and with brevity of speech, if speech is required, and always, and only, with words of encouragement and commendation. These are not very clearly defined services, but



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they brighten and cheer and stimulate both the teacher and the scholars.

But oversight implies much more than kindly thoughts and cheerful words. It calls for more than an endeavour to maintain an efficient teaching staff, to which the officers of the Church should call the men and women with special gifts, even at the cost of much sacrifice. It implies taking a step forward, ample and ungrudging financial support. A school will never forget, however limited its resources, the great causes of the Christian Church at home and abroad. But its own maintenance should be provided by the Church with a generous hand. The superintendent and the teachers should have the utmost confidence that all they ask, with fair and adequate proof of its value for the purpose of equipping the school, will be unstintingly given. As a rule that obligation is cordially fulfilled, for Christian people, on the whole, set no other cause in a prior place. Yet there have been instances where enthusiasts in the work of the Church in the Foreign field, or in the Temperance cause, or in the social life of the congregation, have been tempted to deal a little narrowly with the necessities of the work of the school, and to refuse to pass the "Budget" made up by the teaching staff. It is a false economy, a foolish parsimony, and, one may dare to say, a repetition of the

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conduct of those who evoked Christ's rebuke when He said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not." Whatever may hinder a child, and especially a child whose only knowledge of the grace of Christ is through the Sunday School, from being drawn to the school and impressed by its message, and the love of those who teach it, does hinder the little ones from receiving the blessing of Christ.

There is one especial direction in which this obligation of support has been neglected. That is the provision of larger, better lighted, more wisely-adapted, more fully ventilated, and especially more attractive premises. Too often these are so costly as to be beyond the power of many congregations, even with abundant goodwill. But when one sees extravagant organs, lovely stained-glass windows, elaborately curtained churches, softly cushioned pews, finely carved tables, and even sumptuous retiring chambers and vestries, and then passes to some dark, cheerless, dull-windowed and dirty-walled hall with forms scattered over it, or arranged in the most comfortless of methods, the question of the Church's wisdom and grace is urgent. We may make our churches too fine for the simple worshipper. We may lavish too much money on the sensuous and the æsthetic. We may spend upon ourselves, and our comfort, and the pleasing of the sight of our

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eyes, in a subtle selfishness. If there be a plea for these rich and beautiful adornments, there comes the answer of the counsel, "These things ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone." Everyone can realise not only the deterrent effect of the usual Sunday School premises, but also the attraction of a pleasant hall, set out in order, with some privacy for the teacher and the class, with especial care for the little children who often sit through the hour in weariness, without a gleam of colour to hold their eyes and gladden their hearts. Something has been done of late years to take away the drab look of the walls, to keep the windows clean, and to wash the floors oftener than once every three months. But much more should be done, if we are to train the children in that love of the good and the true and the beautiful to which they will respond, and to associate the call to yield themselves to Christ, with appealing tokens of His goodness and mercy, and of His grace and charm.

### III

So far we have been keeping our eyes fixed upon the school in its working hours. But the Church has a still nobler function toward the school which it alone can fulfil. The controlling purpose of a Sunday School is to lead the little ones to Jesus, and to train them in His nurture

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and admonition. But every wise teacher knows his anxiety regarding the years when the child shall leave the school. He may be aware of the impression made upon the young and sensitive mind. He may have noted a new and serious air investing the child's attitude. But he wonders what will happen when, grown to older years, his scholar passes out to face the tempting world. He has an especial care for the children in whose homes there is never worship and never prayer. There is no purer or juster pride than that of a teacher who can gather, in some felicitous meeting, the scholars whom he taught in past years. They have grown to manhood and womanhood. They are busy in the tasks of life. Yet in such a gathering they recall the early days, they recite the unforgettable words, and even make mention of some hour when, in the silence, they heard another voice speaking through the voice of their teacher. That is a joy akin to the joy of the angels. But too often every teacher is sadly aware that scholars, as they grew too old to sit among the children, passed into their adolescent years, and into a heedless apathy to the worship and work of the church. It is at this point that the Church and its officers should be ready and eager to make some pathway, and to present some open door, through which the children, who have been taught by some devoted

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teacher, may pass into the fellowship of the Church.

Now the Church can observe occasions which may become the pathway to this door into the Christian fellowship. One is the special service known in England as the Sunday School Anniversary, and in Scotland as the Children's Day. The season of the year, the hours, and the manner of observance must be determined by local considerations. But it ought to be an annual gathering, and should be held at a time of the year when the evening light has begun to lengthen. The whole day should be devoted to the celebration. At the forenoon hour of worship the children's address should be lengthened, the musical service adapted, and there should be given to the parents an appealing address on their vocation and obligation in regard to their children. In the afternoon a special programme should be arranged for the Sunday School hour. To this service the parents and friends of the children should be invited, for one reason, if no other, that in this way some, who have been neglecting public worship, may be led into the custom. The minister should be present to lead in prayer, but the Superintendent should preside. The classes should not be formed at this hour, but some speaker of gift and grace should address the children, and he should be limited to twenty

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minutes at the utmost. In the evening the interest should be focussed on the adolescent. There should be gathered together all the children, except those in the Primary Department, with the members of the Bible Classes, of the Girls' Guildry, the Boys' Brigade, and every other agency at work among the young, and the whole service, both of song and speech, should be ordered to enlist their interest, and to make a decisive impression on their hearts.

It is a further grace to hold not only one but two special days for the children. The second day should be a Children's Flower Service. This ought to be held in September, when flowers are plentiful, and it ought not to be combined with the Anniversary Day, which may be chosen from either April or May. The morning worship would be a Harvest Thanksgiving for the whole congregation. The children should assemble in the afternoon, in the Church, and it should be bountifully and beautifully decorated. A band, composed of teachers and scholars, will gladly give the Saturday afternoon to this work and grace of making the house of God lovely with tokens of His care. At this service the minister should preside and speak to the children. In the evening a Children's Service of Song, with an address of not more than ten minutes, should be held. One feature, always most attractive, is

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to entrust the leading of the praise, both in the afternoon and evening, to a children's choir. The solos should be sung by children, for there is nothing more angelic on earth than the young, clear, and artless voice of the child. Their songs should be simple hymns, and never any elaborate or pretentious music. In my experience there has seldom been room enough for the throng who came to the door of the Church to share in such a service as this, and there has been unfailing testimony to its power.

Here we must touch a somewhat delicate question, and that is, the carrying on of a Sunday School apart from an organised Church. Some man of energy and organising ability, along with other like-minded and eager-hearted Christian folk, undertakes Sunday School work, and succeeds in conducting a school, quivering with earnestness, and humming with life. The results arouse many to words of praise. But, as with many similar "Halls" devoted to the teaching of the Word of God, the harvest is not garnered. It has been the writer's frequent experience to know many, once gathered into such independent and unconnected Sunday Schools, who had been under religious conviction, and even professed a change of heart. But when they ceased to attend the school they drifted away, and were not found among any company of believers. To return to

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Christ's illuminating figure, they were gathered out of the wilderness, but they were not led into the fold. They went back to the wilderness again.

Here a Christian congregation has an opportunity which it should seize. It is not prudent to invite the teachers and scholars of this unconnected school to join with its own Sunday School in their special services. Such an invitation may be suspect. It may be regarded as having the purpose of securing some hold upon this outside organisation. But it can be arranged that, on some Sunday evening, the teachers and scholars should be invited to a special service arranged for them, with full recognition of their sincere purpose and their loyal endeavour to lead the children to the Master. This outside school should provide the music, and make out the list of hymns for that evening. The work should be remembered both in the address and in prayer. In that way some children, whose parents have never led them into any place of worship, would be brought into the company of those who rejoice in the fellowship of the Church, and the impression would be deep and indelible.

Now here we have not only the consummating office of the Church, but its supreme opportunity. The teacher on his part should regard the passing of the adolescent to an open confession of faith



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and adherence to the fellowship of the Church, as his objective. But the Church should show and prove its urgent desire to receive the young people, as they pass out of the Sunday School, into its membership. Not only interest and encouragement and sympathy and eager prayer, but special means should be taken to lead their steps through the door. Here the School and the Church should so co-operate that the children will be led into the valley of decision. And here especially the minister, or pastor, or clergyman, by whatever name he may be called, should bestir himself to the leadership of such a movement. If he will leave for a season his grammatical studies, his doctrinal arguments, his apologetic reasonings, his exegetical distinctions—they have their time and place—and, once a year, along with his fellow-officers, devote himself to the ingathering of the young into the fold, it shall surely be found that the Chief Shepherd of the flock is waiting to receive them.

## CHAPTER V

### The Sunday School as an Evangelising Agency

By W. MELVILLE HARRIS, M.A.

The heart must bleed before it feels,  
The pool be troubled before it heals ;  
Ever by losses the right must gain,  
Every good have its birth of pain.

WHITTIER.

### EVANGELISM

JOHN BUNYAN'S human document, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, pictures Christian in distress not knowing which way to go. As he cried "What shall I do to be saved?" he saw a man coming towards him named Evangelist, who asked "Wherefore dost thou cry?" Presently, pointing with his finger, he directs Christian to a wicket-gate, showing him as a guide a shining light. "Keep that light in your eye," said Evangelist, "so shalt thou see the gate; at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do."

An evangelist is primarily a bearer of good news, its goodness being made manifest as action

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ensues. When we speak of the Sunday School as an evangelising agency, we visualise a messenger bearing a message which satisfies the need of the recipient and leads to an eager activity.

By transference of thought, therefore, evangelism has an implied meaning added to its primal significance of preaching good news—a conscious acceptance of the message by the one for whom it is intended. We have, in consequence, to consider the Sunday School in the light of an agency having always in view the paramount importance of making its message effective in changed hearts and lives. In order to evangelise it is not sufficient to preach about or teach good news. To complete the evangelist's work the teaching must instruct and ultimately convert.

The need of the message must be felt, as with Christian, otherwise it cannot urge to action. Thus only does it become a conscious and personal experience, a quickening of the seed which, as Starbuck suggests, has been slowly germinating in the region of the sub-conscious.

## UNTIMELY EXPRESSION.

How then should we pursue the task of making the Sunday School effective as an evangelising agency? In dealing with children it is needful to possess our souls in patience. We must avoid

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inducing a premature experience that should only come with later years. Otherwise shall we not seek an expression of experiences not yet born or articulate? Let our zeal be tempered with a remembrance of our own childhood. Whittier in "The Preacher" tells how, at the coming of the Evangelist

Goodly women and learned men  
Marvelling told with tongue and pen  
How unweaned children chirped like birds  
Texts of Scripture and solemn words.

It is not such untimely expression of something that is the rightful product of fuller maturity that is our aim. Edmund Gosse in *Father and Son ; A Study in Two Temperaments* tells how his father tried to hurry on his spiritual growth, "feeding me," he adds, "with theological meat which it was impossible for me to digest," with results disastrous to his youth. The growth of the soul is like that of the oak tree rather than of the gourd, if it is to triumph over "the world, the flesh and the devil."

### CHILDHOOD, THE TIME OF FEELING.

The true religious educator is ever seeking to induce in the years of childhood that gradual unfolding of the spiritual, which *in due time* will find conscious expression in a personal confession of Christ as Lord. The aim should be to make

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religion real in early years. To achieve this, a life is needed rather than a creed, action rather than words.

Childhood is a time when feeling is uppermost. From right feeling true thought may spring, coming to conscious expression through action spontaneous in character.

A child, wisely trained, will *feel* love for God, as revealed in Christ, as he feels love for his mother ; but he will not give expression to it in the same way as an adolescent or an adult.

Fröbel gives wise guidance on this point when he asserts that " No greater wrong can be inflicted upon a child than to try to make it exhibit the characteristics of the religious life of maturity, either in profession or practice. The only certain product of such training is a hypocrite—the meanest thing that false training can make out of a being formed in God's image. There are two ways by which it may be made impossible for a man ever to become a true type of Christian character as under proper conditions he might have been. The one is by starving his sympathies, his poetic fancy, and his artistic instincts while a child, and leaving him without heart-consciousness of love, formed in a loving home, and head-consciousness of life, gained from life in and behind nature. The other is by forcing on him the religious principles and dogmas of a

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matured theology, or requiring from him the Christian service of adults.”<sup>1</sup>

He objected further to formal lessons on duty, morality and religion, because he believed it to be impossible to convey knowledge in regard to these great questions until their fundamental elements had entered the minds of children through experience.

Regarding this as a fair presentation of the case against an attempt to “evangelise” children, in the sense of expecting articulate expression of experience, what steps can we take to help the child to exhibit later “the characteristics of the religious life” in personal avowal and daily conduct?

## AVENUES OF APPROACH

There are avenues of approach in childhood which, if wisely taken advantage of, will almost assuredly lead to the desired goal. They may be summed up in the main as : Suggestion, Nurture (environment, constant living example, etc.) and Indirection.

We have already hinted that childhood is a period of feeling rather than of thinking, so that the question of how right feeling may be created is paramount.

<sup>1</sup> Fröbel's *Educational Laws for all Teachers*.

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## **SUGGESTION.**

Let us then consider the power of suggestion in conveying right impressions, which will in turn be expressed. In doing this we attempt to engage not so much the thinking powers as the more accessible avenues of feeling. In suggestion, we do this, not by the voice of authority, but by means that tend to a development of the child's will and affections.

Through suggestion we appeal to instincts that are thus freed to work in ways beneficent rather than inimical to their possessor, so that a feeling of love may take the place of hate, courage of fear, and gentleness of cruelty. But feelings thus stimulated must find their outlet in action, not merely in words. It is pre-eminently the function of suggestion to create right action.

## **NURTURE.**

A child's feelings are touched from without rather than as an outcome of his own thought. We see, therefore, how necessary it is that there should be constant nurture supplied in an atmosphere in which it can be assimilated. This is as needful for the growth of the spiritual as food is continually necessary for the growth of the body.

The dependence of the young life is on the social organisations which environ it. Their

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action on the growth of the spiritual cannot be too strongly emphasised. By right nurture and surroundings we may call into play motives that will ennoble and enrich life, instead of those tending to weaken or destroy it.

But nurture, to foster an ever-expanding life, must be supplied through a sympathetic personality. A feeling has been defined as being occasioned by the touch of an impression on the soul. The depth of an impression is dependent largely on the person who is in contact with the young life. The nurture of the soul comes through contact with persons who create atmosphere and exhibit the life and habits it is desired to foster in others.

As negative commands have in increasing measure been replaced by positive injunctions, so the morality taught in stories with "tags" attached has gone by the board in order that the story itself may do its work. Care must be taken not to let the story so obscure the motive of its telling that its discovery may be impossible to another mind.

### INDIRECTION.

There is an appeal in the heroic, the vindication of right and the triumph of good, indirectly grasped through a child's own thinking instead of by the obvious thinking of others. This, in brief,



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illustrates the method of indirection whereby a child is led of his own free will to seek after that which is good, and to avoid that which is evil.

It is, we believe, by such methods that the spiritual life of a child comes into the realm of consciousness. If this be so, it is evident that the definite outcome of evangelising effort must await the preparation of the soil.

We thus see that we may best inspire a child to noble endeavour by personality, through the story, interest in his future, in the spoken word that will influence that future ; but we neither must nor should desire to elicit such expression *from him* as may come naturally in later years. In a word, we must not expect the sowing time and the harvest to come together.

### WHEN LOOK FOR THE BEGINNING OF HARVEST ?

If the methods sketched are the right approach to our task, when may we expectantly look for a conscious result ? Starbuck says that there are two tidal waves of religious awakening at about twelve and sixteen, and that these are followed by a less significant period at eighteen or nineteen. Among youths the great wave is generally about the seventeenth year. While there are, of course, variations of this general tendency, there is undoubtedly "a normal period, somewhere between the innocence of childhood and the

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fixed habits of maturity, while the person is yet impressionable and has already capacity for spiritual insight, when conversions most frequently occur.”<sup>1</sup>

### HOW MAY WE REAP THE HARVEST ?

When the need of the awakening soul has been met by the evangel there arises an almost immediate desire to ask “ Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? ” The new impact *must* find an outlet in expression. It is the soul seeking the atmosphere in which it may grow. We recognise as never before, that spiritual life expands through its activities. Willingness to receive must be accompanied by readiness to act if the dawn of the new life is to grow into a perfect day. Just as continuity in mental life is only possible through activity, so is it with spiritual life.

Speaking of intellectual growth—and it applies equally to spiritual—Ribot says : “ The idea which is only an idea, a simple fact of knowledge, produces nothing and does nothing ; it only acts if it is felt, if it is accompanied by an affective state, if it awakens tendencies, that is to say motor elements.” There is a danger that ideas may lie dormant and not become the agents of feeling and so of action.

Starbuck makes it clear that at the birth of a

<sup>1</sup> Starbuck, *The Psychology of Religion*, p. 35.

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new and larger spiritual consciousness the missionary spirit is born, born with desire to bring the rest of the world up to the high standard of life which youth conceives as possible. The new energy which surges up at this period naturally manifests itself in heightened activity and in increased enthusiasm for great and worthy objects.

### THE PROBLEM OF THE CHURCH.

To harness this activity and enthusiasm at the right time and in the right way is the greatest achievement that the Christian Church can set before it. The periods of doubt and fear, of storm and stress, of exultation and depression, of energy and lassitude, may be far less acutely felt and may have less serious results if the activities, within youth's capabilities, are rightly engaged. How best to employ them, and the healthy enthusiasm generated at this period, is the problem. The arrest we see to-day in Church life is largely due to the fact that this problem has not been sufficiently studied from the psychological standpoint, with the result that inadequate means are adopted to retain our young people within its borders. We have tried to do too much *for them*, and too little has been done *by them*.

The chasm between knowledge and power to act has perhaps a tendency to enlarge at this time under the pressure of modern educational

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methods, and, given the wrong task, there is apt to be a dwarfing and discouraging of the budding spiritual powers at a time when growth should be aided in every possible way.

### THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

The highest and truest expression for youth's unfolding powers lies close at hand in the Sunday School, especially in its modern development. Work with little children is within the realm of youthful capacities. The tasks demanded are in line with the spiritual and mental development of adolescence. The writer has seen again and again in Primary work the power of young children to inspire adolescents to great endeavour. Children see in those older than themselves the qualities that make heroes and heroines. In consequence the goodness and greatness the child imagines inherent in youth tend to become actual. There is a danger that on the other hand the budding altruism of youth may, in adult society, develop into priggishness.

Observers have remarked that such work as young teachers find awaiting them in Primary and Junior Departments, among Scouts, in Guilds of Play, and in countless other activities, gives right direction to the religious impulse that has newly awakened.

Mr. Archibald, speaking on "The Evangel of

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Service," once said, "the old formula was 'evangelise and then set to work,' but a careful study of the psychology of the problem had shown that the work and the evangelising must go hand in hand." In this I entirely agree. Although it has not found expression in words, the fact that a boy or girl has an inclination to serve others indicates that the evangel is at work.

### THE LINE OF DEVELOPMENT.

The truest line of spiritual development then is to excite the enthusiasm of youth at the time of his awakening through tasks within his capacity and in accord with his growth.

Henry Drummond in his *Ascent of Man*, has a central chapter entitled "The Struggle for the Life of Others." Here we see clearly the great evolution that appears in the race is repeated in the individual. In this chapter he makes use of a pregnant sentence, "From self-ism to other-ism is the supreme transition of history." He is right, it is the way of life for the great human race and for the individual soul.

Altruism, love for others, is the supreme mode through which the evangel Jesus Christ brought to men may find expression, and thus expressing itself will bear the fruits of the Spirit. The evolution of life on this planet, Drummond tells us, is not a battle, it is a love story; so is the

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evolution of spiritual life. It is a love story which has its manifestation in a desire to serve the immature and the weak, in aiding their growth to spiritual maturity and strength.

In the unfolding of this spiritual love story the Sunday School has played a great part. It has brought love for Christ and so love for others to many a hungry soul, and has provided means whereby this new-born love may find adequate expression.

## CHAPTER VI

# The Sunday School as an Educative Agency

By ARTHUR HALLACK, M.A.

SINCE the time of Robert Raikes the Sunday School has been so greatly transformed that if he were to return, he would hardly recognise the institution which he began over 140 years ago.

1. Scholars are no longer drawn chiefly from the lowest section of the community.

2. In the place of one or two paid teachers for each school, there is now a host of consecrated men and women, who give their services voluntarily for the welfare of the young.

3. Now that there are elementary day schools to teach the children reading and writing, the all too brief time on Sundays can be given completely to religious instruction.

4. Instead of merely memorising texts Bible passages are studied for their meaning and message.

5. Systematic courses have taken the place of the haphazard selection of Biblical—or other—lessons.

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But of what value is the Sunday School as we know it for the world of to-day ? What has been its chief contribution to the life of the people ? However little they may have learned in it, and however inaccurate their knowledge of Scripture may be, the people who as children were influenced by the Sunday School have gained as their guide a certain moral standard which is commonly accepted as being regulative of behaviour—however far behind it most people live.

This contribution, which Sunday Schools have made to the life of a people, has seldom been fully honoured, nor indeed has an estimate of it been often attempted. But it is painful to contemplate what some parts of our land would have been like to-day without the moral witness and influence of Sunday Schools for the past century and a half. When it is remembered that in most Schools the session does not last more than an hour, and the lesson not half-an-hour, it is certainly amazing that the Sunday School has been so great a power for good. This only serves to illustrate how far-reaching the influence of devoted personalities can be.

Does not this indicate that the key of the situation is the attractive, well trained and dedicated teacher ? The quality of the teaching in the past has varied greatly. Some of it has been very amateurish. A boy was heard remarking



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to another boy as they left the School together : " We had a new teacher to-day ; and it *was* a teach ! " Nevertheless the contact of an immature mind with one less so is seldom in vain.

We must, however, lift up this whole business and make its methods and organisation worthy of its sublime purpose. The Sunday School has suffered from its humble origin and been hampered by its own history. It used to serve only the poorest ; can it be made to serve all ? Can it become a real *School* ?

As an educative agency it has been the main factor in establishing religious ideals and Christian standards for the greater part of the nation. Is its work finished ? Has it been superseded by the day school ? If not, what must be done to make it a more efficient instrument of Christian Education ? To find an answer to this question we must first of all ask another. What is Education ? " Popularly, an educator is one who, being possessed of a large quantity of information, is employed to distribute that information to less fortunate—but not at all envious—young persons."<sup>1</sup> But true Education is much more than imparting information, even about the Bible. Education is not even a mere

<sup>1</sup> *Religious Education in the Church*, by H. F. Cope (New York : Charles Scribner and Sons).

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matter of developing the intellect. Man is a unit—body, mind and spirit are all interdependent and affect each other profoundly. The whole man must be developed if he is to enter into his inheritance as a child of God. This is one idea which is bound to affect the Sunday School of the future. Already our work among the young has been immensely influenced by changes in the fundamental attitude to life wrought by modern Christian thought.

(a) When every child was believed to be born depraved, the chief hope for him lay in his conversion when he came to years of discretion. But since Horace Bushnell wrote his work *Christian Nurture*, Christian teachers have been more and more acting upon the principle that “the child is to grow up a Christian and never know himself as being otherwise.” “Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.” If this estimate of the child is accepted, the work of Christian Education becomes all the more important. The kind of Christian the child will become depends largely upon his nurture and training at home and school.

(b) Another change, especially in the method of Christian Education, has been effected by the Christian conception of the world. If it is evil and only spiritual things sacred, then it is necessary for his salvation that a man separate himself from

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all things else. But that is not the attitude of modern Christian thought. Everything belongs to man, for God made it for him. "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." Religion is therefore more than worship; it is life. Christ came to enrich life, not to impoverish it; and however hard it may be to keep oneself unspotted from the world in which we immerse ourselves, it is made possible by the grace of Christ, who came to give us the victory. "I came that they might have life and might have it more abundantly."

Realising the need of a fresh survey of the whole question of Christian Education in the light of recent Christian thought, and the necessity of devising a policy for the use of the Churches, the Committee of the Young People's Department of the Congregational Union of England and Wales appointed a Commission for such a purpose, and their interim Report was issued in 1922.

The Commission started with the general principle :

(1) *That the Aim of Education is the Development of Personality.* The chief purpose of education is, not to make a living, but to enrich life. And this is so whatever be the content of education. Whether the study engaged in be classics, mathematics, science, music, art, literature—whatever it be, its ultimate result must be

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expressed in terms of moral and spiritual and not of material values.

From this foundation the Commission proceeded to the enunciation of these two inferences :

(2) *That Education should be continued throughout the whole of the Individual Life ; and*

(3) *That Education is the Direct Concern of Christian People.* For it is obvious that if education aims at personality, and personality is a progressive achievement, education must also be progressive and continuous. It is also obvious that if education aims at personality and the Christian Gospel has in view the highest kind of personality, Christian people must be prepared to use education as one of the vehicles of the Christian Gospel.

It was an easy step to the culminating principle :

(4) *That the Christian Churches have a Direct and Practical Concern in the Full Education of the Child, the Youth and the Adult.*

It is the business of the Churches, as representatives and disciples of Jesus Christ, to see that the education of the individual be undertaken from the Christian motive, in the Christian spirit ; that it be directed to the Christian end, the achievement of the highest possible kind of personality, and that in some form or other it be continued through life.

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Then came the crucial moment in the activities of the Commission. The supreme question came to be, How were the Churches to apply these principles? In what manner, by what method, were they to exercise their practical concern in the continuous education of man, woman, youth and child?

To the Commission there seemed to be two ways open and only two.

(5) Either, *The Churches must inspire existing Educational Agencies to pursue their work with true Motive, Spirit and Purpose;*

Or, *The Churches must themselves undertake the Task of the Continuous Education of their own Constituents in the subjects relevant to religious life.*

This led the Commission to make a somewhat careful scrutiny of existing educational enterprise. It is the opinion of the Commission that in the main the elementary education of our land is being undertaken by our Day School teachers with great efficiency, in the right spirit, and with the right aim. There is much to be accomplished, but the current is setting in the right direction. On the other hand, the Commission could not but acknowledge the existence of serious defects. Compulsory elementary education ceases at the age of fourteen. The Day Continuation School carries it on to the age of eighteen, but the scheme has been short-lived.

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The Evening Continuation Classes have supplied a great want ; but the education they supply is disconnected and not systematised. Elementary education, and still more the education supplied by Continuation Classes, is designed with a view to the pupil's subsequent employment. The education of the adult is being undertaken by various voluntary societies who are putting up a gallant struggle against tremendous odds. Whatever be the ideals of the teaching profession, the view is almost universally held outside that profession that the aim of education is to equip the scholar for a wage-earning occupation. In that case education would lead to rampant materialism, and from that the world must be saved at all costs.

In view of the inadequacy of our modern educational system as judged in the light of its ultimate aim the Commission has felt itself impelled to come to the finding :

(6) *That all Churches should, according to their Ability and Opportunity, undertake the Continuous Education of their own Members and Adherents in subjects related to the religious life.*

The ability may be slight and the opportunity meagre, but in proportion to both is the obligation laid upon the Christian community.

The principle thus involved is frankly of a startling character. It might conceivably mean

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in some instances a reversal of present methods. It might mean the elimination of certain enterprises from the engagements of the Church. More probably its aim would be accomplished through and by means of existing agencies.

It is not suggested that any scheme of education be attempted en bloc by any Church. It is suggested only that wherever an opening is provided, a beginning should be made. If a start were made now, then within a generation the Churches would have made a fresh and notable contribution to Christian life and culture.

The finding of this Commission is that each Church should be more than a preaching station and centre of spiritual fellowship. It should be more than a temple of worship. It should be more than a centre of the social life of youth. It should be to its members something of what the University is to the City. It should have an educational programme. It should be a College of Christ.

If this is Christian Education, who is sufficient for these things ? The Sunday School as we know it to-day scarcely is. The very name "Sunday School" is inadequate, seeing that in many Churches the week-evening activities of the children and young people occupy a much longer time than the Sunday session. Some would even change the word "School" so as to escape the

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association of ideas with the day schools, but as modern ideals make these more attractive and suffuse all studies with the Christian spirit, the need for that will grow less. Indeed, is not this the very thing we desire to emphasise—that it is a school and not a mere crèche for minding children while their parents slumber?

If, then, we take the educational aspect more seriously, teachers must be systematically trained for their high calling, buildings must be better adapted to their sublime purpose and larger sums must be spent in the equipment and organisation of the work.

But even these things are not sufficient. If the findings of the Commission are to be carried out, then the Church itself must become a School of Christian Education,<sup>1</sup> with the Sunday School a department—though the main department—of its splendid enterprise. But how can the Church undertake such a task? Are its ministers ready for it? They are trained to preach, rather than to teach. But the Master, a large part of whose ministry was occupied with teaching, has sent His servants to teach as well as preach, and the strategic point now is to secure for every theological student an opportunity for learning the principles and practice of Education,

<sup>1</sup> The title of the interim Report of the aforementioned Commission is "The Church as a School of Christian Education." The Congregational Union of England and Wales. (18.)



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so that he will be capable of serving his Church as its Director of Christian Education. Especially if his Church is small and his School is large he will be bound to consider whether it is not his duty to give as much time to the Christian education of the young as to the edification of the "saints." If his responsibilities in other directions are too many and too heavy, he will need an assistant, whether lay or ministerial, whether man or woman, who will have special charge of the educational departments and societies of the Church.

But what body of workers is there in a Christian Church who are qualified to supervise all its educational agencies? If one does not exist, can we create one? For this there has long been a need. Once the only Church group engaged in education was the staff of the Sunday School. But in recent years there have arisen several other organisations, and in most Churches nothing has been done to correlate their work. Following the publication in 1918 of a pamphlet entitled *The Church and Its Young People*,<sup>1</sup> many Educational Councils have been at work. Their function is to seek to co-ordinate the various Educational activities of a local Church, help it to avoid needless overlapping, start new societies

<sup>1</sup> The Young People's Department of the Congregational Union, Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, E.C.4. (3d.)

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to fill obvious gaps and improve the efficiency of each agency.

When once such a Council begins to work, it will find how essential it is that it should have a register of all the children and young people who are members of its societies and institutions, or in any way connected with the Church. This is the constituency it has to serve, and every member of it is worthy of being registered, or card-indexed, so that the needs of none may be overlooked.

And before the Educational Council has made much progress, it will find it essential to consider fully, and frame carefully, a worthy policy of Christian Education which shall meet the needs of all the life—whether children, adolescents or adults—committed to its care.

With a clearly defined policy to guide it in its operations the Council will quickly discover that somewhere or another a progressive Church is to be found which has been a pioneer in these Educational experiments, and from the denominational Young People's Departments, or the Sunday School Unions, information of what has been done successfully along these lines may be obtained.

In their zeal for educational advance the Council will beware of depreciating and depressing the recreational activities of the Church, though it may be admitted that they may not always have the highest educational value possible.

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“The literary, dramatic, musical or sporting interests to which they appeal are not always made the starting point (as they might be) of a process of education in spiritual values. The Churches are too often content to let them remain as spiritually unproductive (but, it is hoped, innocuous) means of retaining young people within the influence of the Church’s ministry. Happily, the value of such activities as Scouting is now being realised as a training both in the spirit of co-operation and in knowledge and skill, in the will and the capacity to be of service. We do not yet realise to the same extent the possibilities that lie in music, or poetry, or the drama for transmitting moral ideals and enthusiasms, and training the susceptibilities which are the prerequisites of all true worship and delicate sympathy. A big educational opportunity is thus lost, and this part of the Church’s work needs thorough overhauling.”

A marvellous prospect is thus opening up before Christian Ministers and Teachers who will seek to build up their Churches from within by securing all the young life of to-day for Christ.

If Robert Raikes were to behold the Sunday School of to-day he would rejoice and give thanks. If we could see the Sunday School of A.D. 2024, should we not be “lost in wonder, love and praise”?

## CHAPTER VII

### The Sunday School as a School of Christian Character

By A. S. KYDD, M.A.

THE Sunday School exists first and last to awaken the child to the fact of God and to lead him to live for himself the life of obedience and communion. Every Sunday School worker who has pondered over the deeper meaning of the work will inevitably reach some such definition of his aim. Grading, for instance, is not the adaptation of the teaching material to the growing stages of the child's intellectual grasp—it is the attempt to provide for well-marked epochs in his potential religious growth. The prayers and hymns of the Sunday School are not mere conventions subordinate to the teaching, but activities which should be the children's own expression of themselves, and an important element in their God-ward training. The relation of teacher and taught is a personal bond, in which respect and love and intimacy are sought, so that from the experienced to the inexperienced light and truth—the knowledge of God Himself—may pass.

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The fact that the Sunday School is concerned with the religious life of the children does not make it irrelevant to think of the Sunday School as a training ground in Christian character. Lead the boy to Christ, some will say, and his character will turn out all right; a contention profoundly true if it is allowed to carry its full significance. It is not so simple a statement, however, as it sometimes seems. For one thing, many people who have undoubtedly undergone a decisive religious experience in their youth are curiously lop-sided in the character of their maturer years, and it may at least be argued that this want of balance in their conscious Christian life owes its existence to some flaw in their early training. Consider, for example, the indifference, not to say hostility, of many undeniably religious people to modern developments of the Christian conscience in face of social injustice, war, class distinctions and race antagonism. Take the ambition, worldly anxiety, and self-assertion which are common and comparatively venial sins in most religious circles. The causes in most cases lie away back in the early life of those affected. After all, it is comparatively easy to develop religion in children, because religion is part of human nature. It is a different matter to be the channel of those influences that will make the children definitely Christian, for what definitely

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distinguishes the Christian is the Christlike character.

In a negative direction, too, the poorly led and conducted Sunday School can be a disastrous training ground in the wrong kind of character. Children who have been preached at, or taught without mental quickening, tend to become the indifferents of later on. Strict discipline produced by the overbearing force of a powerful adult personality, or a lax disorder brought about by weak good-nature or sentimental ineptitude in the leadership, begets the rebels or the namby-pambies of adult life. Worship in which the children do not feel they are sharing makes for adults who are insensible to religious atmosphere or even definitely irreverent. Stimulation of the competitive spirit and exaggeration of the elements of rewards and prizes may set such a mark on the child's character that it is difficult for him in later years to enter into and possess the true Christian selflessness of outlook and habit. ➤

The wise Sunday School teacher will never, therefore, leave out of his reckoning the kind of character his work is likely to produce. If he himself is "looking unto Jesus" in his own life, he cannot help holding before himself the same ideal of character for the boys and girls he loves. To him the teaching, the worship, and the general life and system of the school are all means shaped

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to achieve one end, or rather means which are designed to play their different complementary parts in moulding the children's characters to the likeness of Christ.

## I

If our work is to lead boys and girls into a conscious life of communion with God and obedience to Him, then nothing matters more than the thoughts about God which they come to possess in their early years. What a man thinks about God determines in the last resort the kind of man he is, and the adult's ideas of God are largely the outcome of the ideas to which he was habituated as a child.

This point has not always been taken so seriously in our Sunday School work as it requires to be. If Christian character—the distinctively Christian type, where fearless trust and confidence, joy and the spirit of self-giving predominate—is our objective, then we must think at least as much of *what* we teach as of *how* we teach. It is possible, for instance, to teach some Old Testament passages in such a way that they leave behind impressions of fear or present a God who is harsh, unfeeling, or remote. Some doctrinal teaching is so crude and abstract that it obscures the simplicity of faith and presents a God who has

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points of difference from the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The matter is too difficult and controversial to deal with further here, but it is extraordinarily important. Let it suffice to say that the teacher never goes wrong who follows fearlessly the light that comes from his own fellowship with Christ, and who takes care not to attribute to God anything inconsistent with the spirit of Christ. "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." There is no caprice in Him to make us distrustful, no reserve in His love to breed our fear, no impatience, no purpose or activity that is not altogether and in every way for our good. God is like Jesus. God was in Christ, giving Himself to the very end, and He is still and always the same. This is the fundamental truth on which the Christian character is based, and wherever it is obscured in our work with children, the development of Christian character may be stunted or retarded, and the subsequent adult life marked by fear, distrust, and selfishness.

Along with this it need hardly be said that the primary character-forming element in Sunday School teaching is the life of our Lord Himself. At certain stages, children are very matter of fact and realistic in their outlook, and the greatest service we can do them at those stages is to present with all the fulness and vividness we can command



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the Gospel record of the Man Jesus Christ. A man's ideal of character for himself is formed by the kind of character he admired and revered as a child. To make Jesus shine forth in all His strength and manhood, in His endurance and courage, in His understanding of and love for the unlovely, in the fulness and depth of His friendship, in His complete acceptance of the hard way in carrying out the Father's will, is to create in a deep and sure way those dispositions and preferences in the immature mind out of which the Christian character will be built. We need not fear that in so insisting on the historical Jesus we will prejudice the children's faith in the living Christ. Rather the child will pass into the life of fellowship with Christ Jesus, possessed of a clearer and deeper insight into who Christ is and what it means to follow Him.

Reference may also be made in passing to the place of what is called somewhat inadequately "missionary education." The Christian is one who bears responsibility for the evangelisation of the world. He is set to live and work for a world in which co-operation and brotherhood between nations and races will be universal. He looks for a city with foundations. His work is to bring the Will of God into every department of the communal life of men, both inside his own nation and throughout the world. Our boys and girls

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must grow into men and women dominated by this hope and vision of the Kingdom of God. To help towards this, appropriate series of lessons, closely related to the Bible teaching, must form an integral part of the Sunday School's teaching material, and the whole atmosphere and outlook of the school be permeated by a concrete interest in the Christian enterprise for humanity.

The good teacher is never done planning ways and means to stimulate the interest and co-operation of the children he teaches, and to lead them to make some truth their own possession by thinking for themselves. Our present concern is to note the value of this principle, which the different kinds of expression work and the newer ways of self-education are helping to emphasise, for the training of character. The child who has been made to think for himself becomes the man of free and independent mind. He can stand on his own feet and is not easily shaken. The part played by Catechisms, platform addresses, or even some kinds of memorising always requires careful handling and scrutiny to ensure that the children's own minds have been at work on what is passed over to them. Otherwise we run the risk of producing later on the doubter or the closed mind. It is easy to be misled by the apparent absorptive faculty of well-disciplined

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children. They "take it all in," as we say, or seem to so do, but in many cases they do not make it their own, and it remains as unvitalised lumber in their minds. The Sunday School teacher, if he guards against this danger and strives perseveringly to create thought and understanding on the part of the children themselves, may serve the Kingdom of God by producing the strong men of faith of the days to come, strong because they have learned to think for themselves.

Sunday School teaching is playing its part in character-training only in so far as the teaching is related to actual life as the children know it. It is not a knowledge of Bible facts that is our aim, but the message the Bible lessons bring to the lives of the boys and girls. The main object of the lesson is the application of a truth to life and character ; that application must invariably come through the personal suggestion of the teacher made easier by the love and respect in which the class holds him. At the same time, there is a kind of practical expression work proper to the Sunday School which is vital to Christian training. This is the expression of the message of the lesson in some form of action or conduct. The wise teacher will use every effort of his ingenuity to lead the children to think of deeds of service which they can undertake arising naturally out of the lesson, and by doing so build into the

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actual fabric of their characters the message of the lesson. Truth received by the mind and heart must be translated into action. The Sunday School is doing an incalculable work for the future if it makes it a natural habit for boys and girls to follow religious impressions by their appropriate expressions in action.

### II

The children's activities in praise and prayer form a highly important part in the training of the Christian character. The fully Christian spirit is always marked by a consciousness of the unseen. The Christian man is one to whom adoration, thanksgiving, and intercession are great and exalting privileges, and fellowship with others in praise, prayer and sacrament a deep-rooted and cherished source of joy and strength. This habit of worship it is the part of the Sunday School to foster. Some people may find it a startling suggestion that you can be schooled in devoutness. True devoutness, as apart from its formal counterfeits, is the outcome of real religious experience, but religious experience is often the accumulation of tiny impressions frequently repeated, of momentary flickers of insight and revelation that recur and recur, pointing the way to the fuller vision or broadening into the open light of day, of apparently insignificant acts of

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faith and devotion deepening into an absorbing habit, in which the whole life is referred to God and lived in His presence.

We cannot begin too soon, therefore, to guide the children in the way of worship. If we believe God loves our boys and girls from their infancy, we must also believe that at every stage of their development they are capable of a life of their own before God. In the Sunday School we act on that belief when we give at least equal place and thought with the teaching to the planning and preparation of the service of worship which accompanies it. The children are called to worship, not by the leader shouting or ringing a bell, but by the atmosphere and order of a place set apart, and by the unspoken suggestions that come from the leader and teachers themselves being under the sense of an impending solemnity for which they have made both outward and inward preparation.

Reality is sought for all through. The hymns need not be specifically "children's" hymns, but they will be mostly of the kind that look outward and not inward. Thus, the child is never set to sing what in his mouth is untrue because it expresses a certain phase of adult experience. Fitting expression of the praise will be sought so as to reveal intelligently the real meaning of the hymn. The praise must be

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adapted to the ages of the children taking part. To make a sturdy junior of eleven sing a hymn whose true sphere is in the nursery or the Primary Department is to wound his rightful self-respect and prejudice his chance of acquiring the way of worship. To expect little children to join in some stirring hymn that is the delight of their older brothers and sisters is to bring the element of tedium and unreality into what should be the most exhilarating of experiences.

The same insistence on reality will characterise the prayers, whether spoken by the leader alone, by the children and leader responsively, repeated or sung together, or, as may be done occasionally, offered in silence. The thanksgiving will express gratitude for the things which children really appreciate as good; the intercession will be on behalf of people in whom the children are interested, or in whose needs they have been carefully led to an interest. With it all, those responsible for planning and leading the worship will seek higher standards of fitness and beauty in the material of the worship, so that thought and language and music alike may increasingly move on levels worthy of the possibilities of the children and worthy of the God whom they worship.

Where the principles here outlined are being worked out with perseverance and resource, children grow to appreciate worship and to

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respond to its opportunities. The service acquires meaning, interest and sincerity. Thus are bred the church-goers of to-morrow who will throng the services of the sanctuary, not out of custom or convention, nor drawn merely by the spell of a human personality, but because devoutness is part of the fabric of their characters.

## III

There remains still to mention, in the brief space available, the part the Sunday School can play in developing habits of service in the boys and girls. In the present writer's opinion, opportunities for actual service activities must be comparatively limited in the average Sunday School. Its work is to be the inspiration of service outside more than its practising ground. Still, in the life and organisation of a good School, there are many ways by which the characters of boys and girls are unconsciously influenced. If the habit of doing things to help is encouraged, the foundations of public spirit and unselfishness are laid. From the Sunday School must come the Christian workers of to-morrow; accordingly, every opportunity is taken of finding duties and positions especially for the older children. From them various groups and committees may be entrusted with such matters as the care of the library, the management of details in social

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gatherings, the leading of the praise, the taking of the offering, the visiting of the absent and sick, and so on. If the Primary Department is staffed with young teachers, a position on the Primary staff is held up as the most honourable of goals for the senior scholars. The element of bribery by means of treats, attendance prizes, and the like, is rapidly disappearing, as it ought, and the aim and spirit of social gatherings and week-night activities is rather directed towards promoting the atmosphere of confidence and friendship between teachers and children, and strengthening the *esprit de corps* of the School. From the Sunday School also will come the men and women who are to support the Christian enterprises of the future, and by interesting them beforehand in the objects of the offering, and in making it a part of the worship, the children are trained to be intelligent Christian givers.

In the end the Sunday School is a community, a place where personality influences personality to create or to destroy. We have in all our schools children whose inner balance has been disturbed by harmful personal influences in home or day school, the child suffering from unwise drilling and overpowering discipline or from the weight of too much liberty, the frightened child or the child starved of affection. The unconscious attitude of the teacher whose own life is in



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harmony with God and rooted and grounded in love may do the essential thing to set free the development of such children, but on the other hand the wrong kind of personality will work harm to the most normal child. It is as true in the Sunday School as in any other department of life that we cannot give others anything we do not ourselves possess. The relation of adult and child in Sunday School is an exacting personal relation. How exacting the inadequate sketch given in this chapter may suggest. We may be assured that truth and freedom, devoutness, humility, and unselfishness will come to children only from men and women whose own lives radiate these gifts of the Spirit.

## CHAPTER VIII

### **The Sunday School as a Training Ground for Christian Workers**

By THISELTON MARK, D.Lit., M.Ed., B.Sc.

As this short paper will finish with the paradox that the Sunday School is a better training ground for religious workers the less it is consciously so, it is necessary to define one's terms. Most of the terms in the assigned title are so familiar that we might be tempted to take their meaning for granted. But not with safety for the present purpose. The terms, "Sunday School," "Christian worker," are always capable of taking on a fresh and a richer interpretation; the former, obviously; the latter, in our approach to the standards and ideals of the New Testament.

I. Between the vague notion of something good for children and young people for which the name "Sunday School" stands in the minds of benevolent outsiders and, say, Mr. Marion Lawrance's conception, there is room for, and there exists, a vast range of differing ideas, both of what the Sunday School is and of what it ought to be. Yet our estimate of it as a training ground

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for Christian workers depends vitally upon the view we have of its aims, life, and activities.

Of course, no conception of ours to-day touches the ideal. We are half-way or part-way people; only at our best when realising that, imperfectly enough, we are mediating between past and future; reaping, on the one hand, the harvest (and a rich one) of the inspirations and the fidelities of the past, and kindling our torch thereat, till we ourselves are inspired to effort by our faith (sometimes our vision) that unspeakably better things are yet to be. A Sunday School would be far from its best as a training ground for Christian workers in any sphere, if its note of invitation were a confident "Come, and see our school"; or "Come, and see what we are doing," or "how we are doing it." The consciousness of not having already attained and the atmosphere of pressing forward towards the goal of our high calling are needed by us all in our effort to learn how to serve. Like man himself, the Sunday School *is* what it is becoming.

Yet, we must have some sort of up-to-date conception of the Sunday School before we can think intelligibly of it as a training ground. In order not to appear to be giving one's own view, two main definitions will be taken from Mr. Marion Lawrance's *How to Conduct a Sunday School*. The first is that "the Sunday School is

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the Bible-studying-and-teaching service of the Church." This gives us our pivot. The Bible is the centre of the life of the Sunday School; Bible study its essential activity. This fact gives directness to our thought of the kind of training ground which by its very nature the Sunday School must be. For, it implies more than the imparting of knowledge of the facts of Bible story. It means entering into the very spirit of the Bible, sympathising with its aim and teaching, learning to give it our love and our trust. The Bible does not lack centrality. The Cross is its symbol of Leadership, creating in us the passion to live sacrificially. The Bible, with the Cross at its centre, fixes the character of the Sunday School on the one side, that of its *essential life*. It is a rallying place for young hearts—a training ground for the strong and loyal worker—because of the positive joy which the living Bible and, above all, the living Christ at its centre inspire.

The other side of Sunday School life is its *organisation*. Here, too, we follow Mr. Marion Lawrance's lead, when he divides the school, roughly, into three sections: elementary (under 'teen age), exactly comprising our Primary and Junior ages; secondary (in 'teen age), including our Intermediates and some Seniors; and adult (over 'teen age). This determines the range of our conception; and nothing less can satisfy our

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ideal of the Sunday School itself, whether as a Bible-studying centre, or as a training ground for the Christian worker.

2. Next, in order to think to any real purpose on this theme, we need to have some clear notion of what we mean by Christian work. It is a wide field. To define it we should need to comprehend the scope of the manifold interests that filled the heart and mind and enlisted the will of Jesus Christ. In a delightful little book by the Rev. John Darbyshire, of the Egerton Hall Clergy School, Manchester,<sup>1</sup> Christ is shown to have had an intensive vision of the Divine in the natural. "Jesus never resorted to invention of the unnatural in order to illustrate the spiritual. The natural world contained all the material He wanted or needed." He was "the first in all history to discover and to praise the beauty of wild flowers." Again (and all this is suggestive of right methods and aims): "Our Lord's utterances were marked throughout by a very great fondness for the actual things of life rather than for the mere thoughts of the mind. . . . The two most characteristic and revealing parables—namely, the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan—are actual pieces of human life which are also essentially divine in their nature as well as utterly

<sup>1</sup> *Things New and Old in the Teaching of Our Lord.* National Society. 1s. 6d. net.

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human." And again, "Nothing in the literature before Him approaches what He said about either flowers or children. . . . He always said that it was better for men and women to be more like children than that the children should try to be like their elders."

These are just hints of the things on which Christ set value; hints, therefore, of the spirit and content of Christian work, as, also, of the enriched view and transfigured personality of the Christian worker. Their scope is as wide as humanity; they include all the highest, tenderest, deepest human interests. And the Christian worker stands in line with Him who, in some transcendent way of which our dim eyes await the revealing, works with us, inspires us, breathes into us the breath of His own life. Of Christ's Ascension, says Dr. Pulsford,<sup>1</sup> "a Pentecost, with all its new gifts of insight, genius and executive power, was an inevitable consequence." From it "dates the new beginning of all the arts"—including, for us, the art of teaching and the art of learning how to teach, the art of working and the art of learning how to work. "Everything received a new impulse. . . . Men breathed and thought from a new inspiration, and became fellow workers with God in the reconstitution of

<sup>1</sup> *The Supremacy of Man*; chapter on "The Testimony of Art (a notable chapter throughout).

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the world.” These words help to indicate how wide is the field of Christian work, and also, in some measure, to define what is meant by the term “Christian workers,” as participators in Christ’s wide vision and sharers of His spirit and His power.

3. Now may we glance back again at the Sunday School as a training ground for those who as Christian workers are to be “fellow-workers with God”?

The answer to the questions embedded in the title of the chapter is already more than half given in the bare definitions of the School and its life and of the nature of work and worker in Christ’s earth-garden. For this is the glimpse of the world which Christ appears to give us. We speak of the Garden of Children (the Kindergarten). We need but to extend the idea. Readers will remember Ruskin’s unspeakably tender words in *Sesame and Lilies*: “All this . . . you can do, for fairer flowers than these—flowers that could bless you for having blessed them, and will love you for having loved them; flowers that have thoughts like yours, and lives like yours; and which, once saved, you save for ever. Is this only a little power? Far among the moorlands and the rocks—far in the darkness of the terrible streets—these feeble florets are lying, with all their fresh leaves torn, and their

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stems broken. Will you not go down among them? ” Such a vision of the service and the call (along with the definitions that have been given) supplies the reader with the material for a better answer than can here be written down concerning the training—almost the ideal training—which the Sunday School can give. But we may glance for a moment at one or two aspects of this training.

(a) Part of the ideal training of a Christian worker is that he should know the Bible—“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” It dwarfs the Bible almost inconceivably to call it our text-book; and yet in a true sense it is that. As a text-book it imparts its own spirit and methods to those who teach from it.<sup>1</sup> (1) Its sheer *language* is such that (not to speak of the greatest writers, Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, Bunyan and others), no one marvels that the greatest modern orators, for example, Daniel Webster, Everett Hale, Gladstone, and Bright, have been students of the Bible, and, consciously or unconsciously, have drawn from it that which gave finish to their eloquence. From the Bible as from no other book, any one of us may learn something of the art and the habit of free, clear

<sup>1</sup> See chapter on “The Bible as a Guide to Methods of Teaching” in *For Childhood and Youth* (James Clarke and Co., 2s. 6d. net). Also in the same book the chapter on “The Use of the Bible in Class.”



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speech ; itself part of a Christian worker's equipment. (2) Behind the language of the Bible and shaping it, is well-knit, vigorous thought. From its pages truth rings out its challenges and its appeals. "Doth not wisdom cry ? and understanding put forth her voice ?" "Understanding" —a striking, deep-going word, in keeping with those intellectual watchwords of the Bible, "I know," "we know," and with its countless confident and re-assuring utterances ! The earnest worker with the Bible is thus a discoverer of truth, *a student of thought* : thought that is full, clear, at first hand, fresh from the anvil of experience or breathed into the mind and soul of prophet and teacher from the Unseen. After twenty-five years' ministry at the City Temple, Dr. Joseph Parker said : "Five and twenty years, and I am still at Genesis, first chapter, first verse. I have preached upon every text in the Bible, and I have not yet begun to preach at all." It perplexed and pained him, we are told, when he heard of Christian speakers having to "go to new novelists and recent poets in order to find something to talk about." Were there space to quote what such free lances as Matthew Arnold, Professor Huxley, and others have said of the Bible as a literature, a philosophy, a culture, it would be evident on the testimony of the most impartial witnesses that the worker with the

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Bible in the Bible-studying-and-teaching service of the Church is going through a fine training—the finest possible if seriously taken—in power of thought, in acquisition of truth, in facility and grace of expression.

[Looking aside from the teacher for the moment to the school officials, it may be doubted whether the art of successful organising is anywhere to be better acquired than in learning to subject mind and energy to the demands of a Sunday School<sup>1</sup>; living, not in the foreground, but rather as background supporters of the central and essential work for which the school exists, namely, the actual teaching. But here one must think rather of the teacher.]

(b) Teaching, in turn, gives *command over one's thought*. Part of the art of teaching is what that master of the art, Thring of Uppingham, used to call "thinking in shape." Preparing our subject or our lesson is, even in its early stages, not merely getting the material. It is also arranging the material. And here comes in the training value of the work in the mastery it gives us of our own thoughts. A lesson is not a scatteration of paragraphs of lesson-notes, somehow lifted up in lumps into the teacher's mind, and unloaded in lumps during the lesson period. A lesson has

<sup>1</sup> See the chapter on "The Sunday School Session," in *For Childhood and Youth*.

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unity. It is material systematised. And the control and use of material is one source of a worker's power. For instance, every lesson has, or should have, some kind of aim or main point around which all the rest falls into place. First, a carefully schemed minute or two of introduction, with the object of calling up the right set of ideas in the scholars' minds so that they may have an awakened interest in what is to be the aim of the lesson. As a direct result of this purpose-serving introduction, the scholars should become aware—always, if possible, as a suggestion or discovery of their own, and only when this fails, through the suggestion of the teacher—what the aim of the lesson, *as they are likely to be interested in it*, is. Then, the aim thus agreed upon has to be accomplished. And the body of the lesson is a sort of bridge, to be built by teacher and scholars working together, between agreement upon aim and its accomplishment. Whether we are teaching or giving an address, or writing an essay or a book, to be able to call upon a plan of operations of this kind is one of the forms of equipment for the work.

(c) But, further, what really is teaching? It is not trafficking in information. It is reaching down to the power-centres within the scholars' lives: to the thought-centres, the centres of pure and true feeling, to the personality or will. We do not finish our work by imparting information.

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We scarcely begin it so. The value of a lesson is the active thought it provokes, the feeling it awakens, and the will-power it enlists. It is not playing with words to say that a good teacher can teach sometimes more than he knows. He can get his scholars to see it; and *that* is teaching. The writer has himself put a question to a class in which, by what looked at first like some fatality, was a little boy of about four years of age; and to that question this little boy gave a better answer than his teacher had in his mind or possibly ever would have had. It was on the picture, now fairly familiar, from Tinworth's terra-cotta group, *Christ and the Children*. In the group, it will be remembered, a small child is lying asleep, reclining against one foot of Jesus, his head pillowed on the other foot. The moment came for asking, How do we know that Jesus is glad that the little baby-child is there? "Because," said the four-year-old-boy, "*Jesus is keeping still.*" He taught us all that part of the lesson. [It was a demonstration lesson before the teachers of a large Sunday School Union.] Indeed, when a lesson is really living its life, everyone may become teacher in turn.

"The so-called bad boy needs someone to start the machinery of his life into operation." *His life!* It is in the minds of the scholars that the lesson and its influence lives, and moves, and has

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its being. It was said of Thring, just mentioned, that "he had a power of finding where the spark of life lay hid in the coarsest of human clay." *Therefore*, he was a great teacher; and *therein* does teaching become a training for Christian work whatever its form.

Moreover, in teaching—for who of us knows all that Christ knew about childhood, boyhood, youth, young manhood and womanhood?—*we have to depend* upon Divine help. Teachers have told the writer, in essays written in connection with lecture courses, of moments of difficulty in the course of a lesson—and a pause!—for prayer, for inspiration. During the pause light was given; and the difficulty was overcome. We never work alone when we work like that. And from such a training ground we move with ever renewing strength to whatsoever task life offers us.

Before saying the last word a now self-evident fact must be repeated. The Sunday School does not become a training ground by our planning that it shall be so. The one chief principle on which the training value of the work rests, is, as T. T. Lynch expressed it, "He who persists in genuineness will increase in adequacy." We do sad despite to the sacredness of the Sunday School hour if we put up our young men to open school or to take a part in the opening, as a training for future work as local preachers! If

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we must practise—and we must—let it be on those who are grown up; not on the children upon whom the effect may be incalculable, nor on boys whose mental growth is at a stage which makes them sensitively discriminating and involuntarily critical, nor on youth with its deep-down passion for the biggest things.

But to end on the note which belongs directly to the theme. The teacher has before him two ideals: the ideal of knowledge (and one of the best ways of learning with exactness is to learn with a view to teaching); and the ideal of power. Each is a factor in a process of training. And there is a word which once fell as an inspiration on the page of a writer as he wrote: "You shall find in this work more Light than you shed; more Power than you expend; more Love than you bestow." The work itself, genuinely undertaken, is the truest training. Personality unfolds with our growth in power in work. Personality is not given to us by measure. It is rather that core of our being, the soul, the actual self, which is open to the Divine; and which receives light and power in the very act of working together with God.

## CHAPTER IX

### The Graded Sunday School

By ERNEST H. HAYES

TWENTY-FIVE years ago the Sunday School Movement could not claim to rank very high in the eyes of either educationalists or religious leaders. In the realm of education remarkable developments had taken place, leaving the Sunday School wholly antiquated in its methods. This fact had become patent to the Church, and, combined with the chronic decline in membership, had resulted in the school being in danger of paralysis or worse. The result was that the affairs of the Sunday School world reached a crisis at the time when the centenary of the National Sunday School Union in England fell due (1903). Looking back, one feels that in this hour of crisis God had His man ready to meet the emergency. A few months before the centenary meetings, Mr. George Hamilton Archibald had landed at Glasgow, during a European tour that was destined to alter the entire course of Sunday School work in this country thereafter. Mr. Archibald was at that time Vice-President and Extension

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Lecturer of a Bible College at Hartford, U.S.A., now called the School of Religious Pedagogy. A few months later he began a campaign of Sunday School reform that has not yet ended. By the time the centenary celebrations were reached, reform was everywhere in the air and actually in the schools of many important centres, and Mr. Archibald had become Extension Lecturer to the Sunday School Union.

Others have shared his labours since, but he is the pioneer who first preached the gospel of "Study the Child," and led the way in experimenting with the method of grading that has now become an accepted principle in the Sunday Schools of every denomination in the land. The graded method was first applied to Sunday School work among infants, and in a comparatively short time Primary Departments, worked on modern and approved educational methods, began to replace the old Infants Classes. The radical change in method involved is best demonstrated by the fact that the old galleries were pulled out and destroyed, their place being taken by the little primary chairs, in which for the first time the little child discovered that comfort was compatible with religious teaching. With the eager outlook and forward tread of the true pioneer, Mr. Archibald stepped out and experimented among Juniors as soon as the Primary



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movement had become established on sound lines. Later Intermediate work received attention, and at the present time the best methods for Senior work are being investigated.

After this cursory historical survey, we shall proceed to describe the lay-out of a fully graded school; that will serve to show how the grading principle can be fully applied and successfully worked out in the Sunday School of to-day. To make this perfectly clear it will be useful to indicate the essential features that hall-mark the properly graded Sunday School. They are: (i.) it is adapted to the scholar's development; (ii.) it is uniformly graded throughout; (iii.) it produces perfect unity among its workers; (iv.) it is suitably housed in a *school* building; (v.) the spiritual note is dominant throughout.

(i.) *Adapted to scholars' development.* It goes without saying that a graded school provides a religious education that is scientifically adapted to the scholars' development at every stage. This means that the school is so organised on a psychological basis that each department corresponds with a definite stage in the scholar's development. The fact that the child develops by definite "steps," marked off from each other by "crises" that occur roughly every three years, enables us to dove-tail our organisation almost perfectly into the child's growth.

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Thus from his fourth to sixth birthday the scholar passes through the stage of early childhood—the period of great activity and quick physical development, marked by a craving for constant change and ceaseless movement. This period is catered for by the Beginners' Department, where these little folk can be taught almost exclusively by doing. About the sixth birthday there is a noticeable spurt in development, and we meet this by promoting the Beginner to the Primary Department, where his more advanced needs will be catered for, and where he will be perfectly happy until the next crisis. The Primary scholar is capable of longer concentration of interest, and his aimless activity has developed into doing things with a definite purpose. The Primary department method therefore provides for definite religious teaching by way of Bible and Nature stories, to be expressed afterwards by hand work.

By the time the scholar's ninth birthday approaches the Primary method does not satisfy, and this heralds the approach of the next crisis in the child's development. The wisely-organised Sunday School is ready to meet this emergency by having a Junior Department to which the scholar can now be promoted.

The period of boyhood and girlhood through which the scholar next passes has its clearly marked characteristics, and for these the Junior Department

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provides. Mental development is more rapid, producing a hunger for facts and knowledge that can be stored away for future use. The emotions are also surging upward, feeding the springs of admiration, of power, loyalty, and fair-play. Therefore Junior work centres round stories of daring deeds and high adventure, and satisfies the mental hunger by Bible memory work and talks about Bible geography and manners and customs. Towards his twelfth birthday the Junior once again shows signs that a crisis has arrived in his development, and again we see signals that we must obey by promoting to the next department of the Sunday School. The Junior is now on the threshold of a new world; he is about to enter his "teens," and there begins the greatest change of all—the pubertal crisis—that heralds the dawning of the powers of maturity and the beginning of the age of adolescence.

The Intermediate Department is the most difficult of all, and the task of the Sunday School teacher is not lessened by his knowledge that this is also the most important stage in the scholar's development. Not only are the reasoning powers developing fast, but personality is emerging. This means that the Intermediate scholars must be given some share in the management of their department's affairs, and must be held to the school by definite catering for their wider interests.

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Hero-worship is now our most useful asset for the task of capturing this developing personality, with all its possibilities, for Christ and His Church. The consecrated and enlightened teacher will miss no avenue of approach, and will find a way of surmounting all obstacles, in order to secure a place for the Master in the long, long thoughts and the many ambitious plans of the future that belong to this period of youth.

About the fifteenth birthday, or at the school-leaving age, the scholar reaches a further stage in development that must be recognised and provided for if organised Christianity is to have any permanent hold upon him. Realising this, the Graded School hands over its Intermediate scholars to the Senior Department. Here, for obvious reasons, new terminology must be adopted—the name, Sunday School, is quietly dropped, and the *scholar* we have trained in the Sunday School becomes a *member* of an Institute or Senior Department possessing large measures of self-government, where he may become a useful member of a commonwealth that is a training ground for Church membership and Christian service.

(ii.) *Uniformly graded throughout.* In a properly organised school the grading is balanced and symmetrical, and there is a uniformity of method that makes one school of all the

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departments. By this means the scholars will possess an *esprit de corps*, and will realise as they move up from one department to another that they are still in the same school. This means that we must secure that every department possesses the main essentials of the graded system. We have only space here to indicate the five essential features that must be common to all departments to secure the full benefit from the Graded system. (a) An *Assembly lobby*, where the children can unrobe and prepare for the session, is an absolute essential. Rightly understood, this lobby is a kind of half-way house between the street and the place of worship, and as such is as necessary for the Intermediate as for the Primary scholar. (b) A *Separate Session* for each department, in order that every item in the Order of Worship—hymns and prayers, as well as the teacher's story-lesson—can be properly adapted to the understanding and spiritual needs of the scholars of each grade. Thus alone can we make the Sunday School a place for training in worship as well as religious instruction. (c) *Graded Lesson Courses* must be used throughout the school, to ensure the healthy spiritual development of the scholars. By means of these graded lessons a systematic and constructive scheme of Christian education is placed within reach of every Sunday scholar. In the Primary he is taught the love of God and kindness of Jesus ; in

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the Junior he is trained to admire the heroes of the Old Testament and to worship Jesus, the greatest Hero and the Saviour of all; in the Intermediate it is hoped to enlist his service for Jesus, the King; and in the Senior he is taught the rules of the Kingdom. (*d*) *Expression work* must be provided in every department, for the maxim "No impression without expression" is equally true for every grade, though the form of the expression work will be entirely different in some departments. From the simpler forms of handwork of the Primary, the scholars will move on to more advanced work until in the Intermediate and Senior departments a large degree of self-teaching will be possible. (*e*) *Training classes* (or Teacher's Conferences) are an essential feature of the work in all departments. Attendance at the weekly Teachers' Class is considered an integral part of the teacher's duty and as imperative as class teaching on Sunday. The programme of work carried out at these meetings is naturally varied in each department, as is indicated by the titles, viz., The Primary Training Class, The Junior Preparation Class, The Intermediate Teachers' Conference, The Senior Class-Leaders' Meeting.

(iii.) *School Unity*. Perfect unity of aim as well as method is a notable characteristic of the properly graded school, and because the departmental work is entirely separate the school as a

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whole must be so organised as to maintain complete unity among all its parts. Unity of purpose among leaders of departments is preserved through the School Council, which consists of the general officers and department leaders, and meets regularly to co-ordinate the work of each grade, to arrange school fixtures that are common to all, to preserve uniformity of method, and to arrange for the regular promotion of scholars and the passing on of teachers from one grade to the other.

Fellowship between teachers in all departments is secured by united meetings for prayer, for business, and for conference on fundamentals and methods. Some schools find a brief devotional session attended by all teachers before they separate into their departmental groups for training and study, to be a most fruitful means of preserving unity and co-operation.

(iv.) *A suitable School Building.* Too much is often made of the "premises problem" of the graded school, and one therefore desires to make it clear at the outset that an elaborate suite of buildings is not an indispensable preliminary to complete grading. Much has been done by way of adapting departments and times of meeting, in order that the excuse of unsuitable or inadequate buildings be not allowed to bar the way to better methods. Yet when all is said and done, no

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Church can reasonably expect to reap the full benefit from its Sunday School work if it does not provide proper workshops and the necessary tools for its teachers. Trustees and Church officers must be helped to a right sense of proportion, and to grasp the enormous strategic importance of the Sunday School. When they realise that eighty-five per cent. of their Church members are contributed from the Sunday School, which is also the training ground *par excellence* for Christian workers, no effort will be spared to provide adequate accommodation of the right kind. The hall-mark of an ideal school building has been described as "a togetherness and a separateness," viz., the department rooms should be grouped around a common centre rather than be completely isolated, with one great rallying place for all scholars and teachers on occasion—the Church building itself.

(v.) *A Dominant Spiritual Note.* Since our aim in the Sunday School is not mere education, but the development of Christian character in all scholars, expressed at each stage in the particular form natural to that grade, every effort is made to conserve the spiritual atmosphere and to secure spiritual results. All our work has failed, in the highest sense, if we have a perfectly running machine, or a fully developed organisation which is soulless, and produces merely intellectual



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results. Spiritual work can only be done by spiritual methods and by spiritual workers. In every department the training in worship, as well as the religious instruction and its expression, must be done in an atmosphere charged with spiritual power and suggesting an unseen but very real spiritual presence.

Organisation and machinery are necessary to provide a channel through which Divine power can work without let or hindrance; but in the ultimate it is the personal devotion and spiritual experience of every worker that counts. "Religion is caught, not taught," and only as leaders and teachers know and live in closest contact with the living Christ will they be able to introduce Him to the scholars and prevail upon them to know Him also. This paraphrase of St. Paul's words may be used to sum up the relation of the teacher to his fellow workers and to the Graded School :

"That teaching the truth in love we may serve Him in all departments, which is the Head, even Christ ; from whom the whole school, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every department supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every department, maketh increase of the Kingdom unto the edifying of itself in love."

## CHAPTER X

### The Primary Department

By JESSY S. CALDERWOOD

“THE object of true education,” says Ruskin, “is to make children not merely *do* the right things, but *enjoy* the right things.” This thought underlies all the work in the Primary Department. Formerly the personality of the child was scarcely considered ; all our attention was concentrated on the Lesson, the memory work, the giving out of texts, and the calling of the Roll. Only through these methods, we thought, could the spiritual life of the child be nurtured and a knowledge of God and personal friendship with Him be established. The natural characteristics of children, their restlessness, their curiosity, their imagination, their love of touching and handling we regarded, if not as signs of original sin, at least as undesirable traits which ought to be suppressed. What splendid allies these characteristics have become now that they are recognised as God-given instincts, and are trained and used to secure the atmosphere, the attention, and the eager interest without which our work would be in vain ! To

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the little child the word "Primary" has a magic sound conjuring up a vision of all that is pleasant and attractive, wonderful and interesting. Little feet are eager to reach its happy precincts, little voices are loud in its praise, and little hearts are wide open to its gracious influences. Enter with the children the Primary room which has been made as beautiful as circumstances will permit. All unsightly objects are hidden away, on the walls are a few carefully selected pictures hung low enough to be seen by the children, comfortable little chairs arranged in orderly fashion invite them to be seated—very different from the high forms which gave no support to the back and from which little feet dangled in mid-air. The table with its attractive cover, the tiny cradle that will presently hold the babies' names, the offering bowl, the bright colours of the flowers, the growing plants on the window ledges, all have their part to play in the creation of the right atmosphere. At hand is the Bible, for little children love its mystic words, and the beauty of its cadences.

Behind this desire on the part of our Leaders and teachers to have the best in art, in music, in equipment, is a deep spiritual aim. These things are the medium by which we convey spiritual ideals to the mind and heart of the child. Common things are endowed with uncommon significance

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and the small things speak of the great things. Instinctively the children respond to this environment. As the quiet chords of music fall upon their ears, heads are bowed and a reverential silence prevails.

Will the realisation that "God is a Spirit" come to the children more readily through the wearisome repetition of a text, or through this God-consciousness which we have created by the power of suggestion? "When you awaken the faculty of wonder," says a well-known writer, "you get the child to revere, and when you get him to revere you will soon get him to worship."

The curiosity of the child in the wonder of this beautiful world is one of the pathways by which spiritual truth may find an entrance to his heart. "Through nature to God," that must always be the aim of every talk on flowers, birds, sky or sea; by this means we may enlarge the child's conception of God. It is so easy to interpret Him in terms of Fatherhood, but is there not a danger that we stress the human analogy too much, and fail to bring to the child a sense of the greatness of the Infinite?

Nothing so quickens and kindles the imagination of the child as the Bible story, but it must be *told*, not read; told with all the enthusiasm and fervour of one who believes it, who sees every incident happening, who apprehends the spiritual

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message and can convey it to the child embodied, not embedded, in the tale. To have that spiritual truth made concrete in daily life is the problem of "expression work." Children love to draw the story or build it up in the sand tray, thus making use of the creative faculty which is such a dominant instinct in childhood, but the application of the lesson may require something more. Sometimes a hymn or prayer is the best expression of the lesson, sometimes the offering—which can be used in countless ways of service—awakens the sympathies of the children in others, giving them some conception of the oneness of the human family. Again, the verse read from the Bible, or a question asked, may set the child thinking of some practical expression of the story. Often the practical application needs the co-operation, sympathy and interest of the home, without which much of our work as teachers is fruitless. Nothing is more ominous in these days than the decay of home life and the lack of interest shown by many parents in the spiritual education of the child. Too often the work is left wholly to the Sunday School, but the Primary is slowly but surely changing this attitude and thus proving in many ways its value to the home. One of our greatest assets in this task of linking home and school in a closer bond lies in the Cradle Roll. To the parents who are members of the Christian

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Church it is an added joy at the birth of the child to have that joy shared by the School; to the parents who are indifferent it comes as a pleasant surprise that the Church or School should remember them, though they may have forgotten the Church. It is, too, often the means of attracting parents who are outwith the Church into its fellowship. Through the Cradle Roll the Primary comes into intimate relationship with the parents. The interest taken in the new little life, the name added to the Cradle Roll, the pretty enrolment card sent to the home, the children's prayer of thanks, the frequent visits of the Cradle Roll Superintendent, forge links between home and school which bind both in a loving chain of unity. Still another link is through the celebration of the children's birthdays in the Primary Department. Invitations are sent to the Parents inviting them to come to the school on the Sabbath when the birthday wish will be given and the birthday prayer offered. To the little child, one of a numerous family where the problem of clothing, feeding and housing absorbs every thought of the parent, the birthday celebration is a red-letter day. Parents may have forgotten but the Sunday School remembered! The card or the flower or the little gift taken home brings from the parent a fervent expression of gratitude as she says in faltering accents to the Leader; "It was

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good of you to remember the child's birthday." There is no surer road to the heart of a parent than through the heart of her little child. A Parents' Social also provides an opportunity of arousing their interest and sympathy. In a hall made specially attractive for the occasion, with music and the indispensable cup of tea, we can create an atmosphere in which it is easy to speak of our aims and objects; our difficulties and problems, our earnest desire to have their co-operation in our work. And such an appeal never fails to win a response, for parents, realising all that is being attempted and accomplished, are gratefully appreciative and anxious to assist in whatever ways are suggested.

But the Primary is not of value to the child and the home only—it is also of value to the school. The thoughtful observer must see that much of the work achieved in the Sunday School is counteracted, if not entirely lost, through the seeming impossibility of retaining the older boys and girls after the age of fourteen or fifteen. Many and varied are the causes which contribute to this regrettable condition. These young people consider themselves grown up; they claim liberty to do as they like, they resent authority imposed from without; they dislike responsibility unless it be of their own choosing, they are changeable, variable, loving excitement, fun and

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novelty. Respect for parents, duty, or the Church is not always apparent, so afraid are they of being thought old-fashioned and "behind the times." Yet in these young people is much that is of infinite value. They are not all selfish; altruism is there, just waiting to be given direction and guidance; idealism is there, waiting to be translated into action; enthusiasm for a great cause is there, just requiring to be claimed for heroic service. That these young people do respond to the appeal for service is proved by their willingness to become teachers in the Primary Department. To take them just as they are, with all their faults and failings, with their capacity for goodness and righteousness, and train them to become teachers is the aim of the Primary Department. The wise Leader will not stop to analyse the motives which prompt these adolescents to offer their services. Possibly it is the attraction of the social life—for they want to make friends and have friends—or the desire to assume authority, or a love for little children, or a keenness to teach, or a very real desire to serve Christ. But one condition the Leader will lay down—that they agree to attend the weekly training class, such attendance being compulsory. The training class is of vital importance, it is the power house of the department—the place where the standard



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is set for the future teaching of the whole school. A Primary without a training class would be like a ship without a compass, for it is through the training class that life in all its aspects is directed, controlled, and guided by the spirit which permeates all our work. These young people are only raw recruits still needing help and guidance in their moral, mental and spiritual life, though they may not realise it. We cannot force such help upon them, but we can give it to them in such indirect ways as the training class and Primary provides.

The true way to serve Christ is by serving our fellows. "The growth of the spiritual life," we are told, "comes through its activities rather than through mere receptivity." It is astonishing to find how quickly the character of these teachers is affected by their work among the children. Many a parent will testify to the effect it has made upon her lad or girl. The loud-voiced learn to speak softly, the rough to act gently, and the selfish to be thoughtful. Because of the little child, they will begin to discipline their own lives; truth, courage, sincerity, honesty, tact, patience, love—just those virtues which cannot be imposed from without—flower in soil which is congenial to their growth. In the heart of the adolescent is a boundless wealth of love, which too often finds expression in undesirable ways, but, given some

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little children to love, think and care for, that love will flow forth to bless and ennoble life. The moral life of the teacher is strengthened, purified and inspired by the work in the Primary. The preparation of the Bible story which seems on the surface such a simple thing involves much study, time and thought. The story must be studied primarily for its value to ourselves. Our own life must be enriched ere we can enrich the lives of the children. The truth for us contained in the lesson must be grasped ere we seek to find the message for the children. What an infinite variety of subjects we touch upon as we analyse our story! The time—carrying our thoughts back to the “long ago.” The place—making us study the geography of the Holy Land with an interest which the geography of the day school never awakened. The persons—living again for us as we think out their thoughts, their characteristics, their dress, their profession, their manners and customs. The events—leading to the inevitable climax. How fascinating is the interest of linking these Bible stories to modern life, tracing their influence in the works of great poets, great artists, great musicians, great saints! How eternally fresh and living they are, as we bring to their study all that illumines and makes them vivid. To build up the story for the children becomes a joy. What will they like? We must

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think again of the child's characteristics, how each has its own individuality ; how much better it is to give positive teaching than negative, how to grasp the child's point of view, how to help him to express his ideas and thoughts of the story. Truly the study of the Bible lesson is mental culture of the highest kind, calling forth and stimulating the intellectual abilities of our young teachers.

To the development of the social life of the teacher the Primary adds its share, for visits have to be made to the children's homes in the interest of absent or sick scholars. There the teachers often learn how much environment and social conditions help or handicap the physical, mental, and spiritual life of the child. Their emotions are touched and the wider implications of the Christian Faith begin to appear. The responsibility of parenthood, and the duty of citizenship are considered and discussed in the training class. Will these thoughts not have their influence on the parents, the homes and the communities of the future ?

But the greatest of all the influences which flow from the work of the Primary and training class is the effect upon the spiritual life of the teachers. Very quickly do they realise that true religion is life, not profession, that practice is more than precept, that control is from within, not from

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forces without. The teachers work from week to week to create an atmosphere in which the child will feel conscious of God, to make Christ a living Personality, to have the children love Him and speak to Him as a friend, and in so doing find their own spiritual life deepened and strengthened. Irresistibly they are drawn more and more to love Christ and to seek to do His will, until there comes an hour when their lives are surrendered to His guidance and dedicated to His service.

And the Church will benefit which receives into its fellowship young enthusiastic souls who have high ideals of life, having proved from practical experience the joy of serving others, who are students of the Bible, and know the value and the privilege of worship; who realise that the spiritual life is a continual growth reaching ever onward and upward, drawing to its enrichment all that "is true, pure, lovely and of good report."

Thus is the ideal of the Primary fulfilled and the circle completed from Cradle Roll to Communion Roll.

## CHAPTER XI

### The Junior Department

By EMILY HUNTLEY

THE second main division of the Graded Sunday School is the Junior Department, which makes provision for the years of childhood that lie between the Primary period and the dawn of adolescence—from eight to eleven or eleven and a half.

In the ungraded school the scholars under and over twelve meet together in the “main school” and unite for the entire session except the lesson. The Graded School recognises that twelve years old marks the dividing line between two distinct life grades, each marked by interests, powers and attitudes, which offer peculiar opportunities, alike in the subject-matter of teaching, and in training in worship and life. It therefore forms a definite department, with separate staff and service, for the scholars under twelve. In doing so, it not only aims to lay good foundations for the elements of faith and worship, but to untie the

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hands of those who seek to serve the critical early years of adolescence.

It is difficult to generalise on the characteristics that mark any period of the living whole of life. To make any statement of life trend too definite is to make it too small. Life is always bigger than its labels. But for convenience it is good for the teacher to seek for some unifying purpose which may help him to interpret the meaning of the varied and changing interests of child life. We suggest then that a certain *tendency to conform* characterises in the main the interests and powers of the Junior child.

His interests are manifold but chiefly concrete. The maker, the doer, the traveller, the adventurer, are more to him than the poet, the prophet, the saint. The common street is full of possibility to him. His brain photographs the shapes of motor cars and all the new things of modern life. The mechanism of wireless makes no too severe demands on his powers of observation. The world grows ordered through the note-making apparatus of eye and ear, hands and feet. He makes detours in his errands, to explore for the purpose of the mental map of life he is unconsciously making. He is not out to alter the world, but to find himself at home in it. His mental powers wait upon his interests. Imagination demands more

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“property” than when he was seven. The map that is almost a picture, the model, the drawing, or the vivid description, give start to the realistic plays of the period. With a bull’s eye lantern what adventures may not loom! In the “Cubs” uniform he is the heir of the noble!

The power of reasoning in simple sequence from cause to effect, offers immense opportunity for laying foundations of truthful and rational living, as well as for a presentation of truth in simple and logical form.

Memory—which always waits upon imagination and reason—shows marked activity in these years, and is ready to register alike experiences, thoughts, feelings and words, against the days to come.

Morally, the period offers peculiar opportunity. The child is an individualist, and his strongest instincts impel him to bring his powers to the measure of a standard. Competitive feelings and an underlying simple sense of justice urge him to conform and prove his power to come under the law of street, playground, home, school. He loves to do as well as his fellows; he will obey the “law of the pack,” even if it conflicts with selfish interest, in order to prove himself equal to the standard.

At this time it is comparatively easy for the child to acquire habits of right doing that may

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set him free against the day of inner and deeper moral and spiritual conflict.

It is our aim in the Junior Department to recognise and make use of all that the child offers, in order to win him to the love and following of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to train him in simple habits of worship and right-doing. To this end we seek to teach the Bible as a Book of real experiences in real places ; to reveal its interest through his own exploration of its pages, and to furnish him with portions that will help to give shape to his ideals and desires.

Let us glance at some of the ways in which the Junior Department seeks to fulfil its aims.

### ACCOMMODATION.

A well-lighted department room, without class-rooms, and an entrance lobby fitted with pegs for hats and coats, are desirable. Classes are arranged in the open room in semi-circles, which become circles for class-teaching.

From five to seven is the ideal number for a class. Larger numbers not only make it difficult for a moderate tone of voice to be heard, but prevent the free individual expression of the children which is most desirable. There should be sufficient space between the classes to allow



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each group to act as an entity. Chairs are greatly to be preferred to forms for seating. A platform is unnecessary and undesirable. The leader requires a table for books and offering bowl. A good blackboard is essential, and should be used almost every Sunday.

A musical instrument, preferably a piano, is required. Each class should have its own numbered box or bag containing all necessary materials. The care of these offers one of the best opportunities for training the children in the sense of responsibility. Torn or disfigured books or broken pencils should be considered a disgrace to the class. Time should be allowed specially for the careful and orderly arrangement of books. Each class should have a steward appointed for a short term of weeks and recognised by a badge.

Many leaders prefer large hand-printed hymn-sheets which may be seen by the whole department, to individual hymn-books. Greater unity and better expression in singing can be obtained ; and it is an advantage to require only one book, and that the Bible, to be handled during the session. Hymn-books may, of course, be used for special occasions.

### STAFF.

Each department requires a leader, deputy-leader, secretary, pianist, and a teacher for

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each class. The *Leader* is responsible, not only for arranging and conducting the Sunday Session, but for the fundamental work of conducting the weekly training class for his teachers. This class is the crux of the department. In good graded schools an evening in the week is set apart for the training of teachers. A united Opening Service of about a quarter of an hour gives the General Superintendent the opportunity of meeting all the teachers, and strengthens the sense of unity in the school. The first condition of the appointment of a Junior teacher (after his personal faith and character), should be pledged attendance at this class. Here, week by week, he learns, not only to prepare the lesson, but to understand the child better. Methods are studied in the light of the scholar and his needs. Systematic Bible study gives each lesson its wider setting. And co-operation in the planning of the Sunday service, and in the wider plans for the department, takes the strain from the leader's work and prepares the way for true unity in worship and teaching.

As a rule Junior Department teachers are young men and women on both sides of twenty— young enough to find zest in the live interests of their classes, and enthusiastic in embodying in their Christian life that which they aim at for the children. The best feeding-ground for the staff is undoubtedly the Primary Department,

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but room should be made for recruits, who for various reasons have missed the early training, but are willing to conform to the training-acquirements of the department.

For the help of leader and teacher, a small up-to-date library should be provided. As the lesson courses pass on to fresh sections of the Bible, the necessary background books should be added.

### THE ORDER OF SERVICE.

Good Junior Department work requires the thoughtful preparation of an Order of Service each week. The general relation of the items may be maintained with occasional variation, but the content of each service must be planned in consciousness of the thought of the lesson and the life-result aimed at. Haphazard choice of hymns, or the prayer that has no definite aim are excluded.

As a rule the service will include—*Prayers, Hymns, Bible work, Supplemental work, Lesson, Expression work, Offering, Prayers.*

### PRAYERS.

We aim, not so much to pray for the child in his presence as to train him to pray. To this end systematic preparation for prayer is

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necessary. Very short and simple teachings on prayer should be given from time to time and the children encouraged to name for themselves special topics for thanksgiving and petition. In order to help them to give fit, simple and reverent expression to their own desires, short forms of prayer—Bible words, collects, and sometimes portions of hymns—may be taught. A series of simple petitions may be voiced by the leader, and each completed by a short response from the children. The use of silence for personal thanks, confessions, and prayers, may be practised with real meaning by Junior children. Short extempore prayers will not be excluded, but the leader must always submit his own larger needs in prayer to his aim for the children.

To the Junior child prayer is a far more simple and literal thing than to his older brother, and the habit of individual prayer begun at this time may be a safeguard and strength through life. Short prayer sentences, such as are found in many responsive services, are of great value in opening and closing the session.

Shortness, simplicity, sincerity, reverence—these should mark each prayer.

### HYMNS.

The selection for the Junior Department will exclude many hymns of inner experience

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and yearning, but include many of the active, virile, picturesque hymns of the Church. Where leaders print their own hymns on large calico sheets, careful selection is guaranteed, and teachers will co-operate in searching many fields for suitable verses. (By far the largest selection is found in the *Sunday School Hymnary*, edited by Rev. Carey Bonner.) It is not necessary that each hymn should bear directly on the subject of the lesson. One should definitely emphasise the aim for the day, and the rest be in harmony with the general thought.

A good pianist, able to play with precision and expression, is of the greatest value in the department. The children should be accustomed to listen appreciatively to the tune being played, and to rise when the last line begins.

### BIBLE WORK.

Here the Junior Department offers unique opportunity. The Bible is a large and strange book, an unexplored territory, to the child fresh from the Primary Department. If it is ever to become his own possession, he must be trained to handle and use it intelligently for himself. In the Junior Department time can be allowed for the slow process of finding Bible places. Mere mechanical memorising of the

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books defeats its own end. The interest of the children can be enlisted in the discovery of their order and arrangement in groups. Soon the mind will hold a mental picture of the plan, and familiar stories will be located in their right place. The occasional use of bookmarkers or the making of simple charts will aid memory.

But place-finding must never be an end in itself. Far more important is the discovery of passages that may have real meaning and value for the child. Leaders and teachers should co-operate in making a list of such passages, and selecting week by week those suitable for worship, or for the strengthening of the lesson-thought. As a rule the use of the lesson-passage for the service of worship is not desirable. Its place is in the class, or occasionally, to follow the lesson. A good general rule for Bible reading in the Junior Department is to avoid such passages as express the spiritual experiences and conflicts of adult life, and select those of aspiration, and joy in the character and works of God. The sayings of Christ, many of the Gospel narratives, and a few of the more "concrete" portions of the Epistles are suitable. It is more important that the child should feel the beauty and truth of the reading, than that he should fully understand it.

From the passages selected for reading, an inner choice should be made for *memorising*. The

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Junior Department makes possible systematic memory work, free from the danger of false methods and association. A few minutes at a time spent about a portion of a Psalm or some sayings of Jesus, will suffice to set phrases in relation. And the frequent use of the passages in worship—either recited or sung—will give them a natural place. Prayers memorised from the Bible should be embodied in worship.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL WORK.**

Supplemental work consists generally of the talk by which the Leader prepares a mental background for the lesson. It may consist in a blackboard talk on places, customs, objects. Drawings of wells and tents, city-gates, ploughs and weapons become familiar. Little maps that are half-pictures give good material for the realistic imagination to work upon. Photographs and pictures give reality.

Or the talk may be concerned with some modern embodiment of the thought of the lesson, and lead the way, by question and answer, to the point where the "message" can be recognised by the children.

## **THE BRITISH LESSONS COMMITTEE.**

The British Lessons Committee now makes special provision for a Junior Department course.

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The selection is guided by those studying the child in practical first-hand work.

The small class group makes possible the practice of individual "*Expression exercises*" by the children. Small books are provided, with pencils and crayons, and by writing, printing or drawing, the children are encouraged to express their thought about the lesson. It is extremely interesting to note the development in the power of expression as the child passes through the department. Loss in the early freedom of the Primary picture is compensated by increasing meaning and thought.

The Junior Department session would be incomplete without the *offering*. Great care is exercised in the selection of objects to which the gifts are devoted. The training of the child to care, and to give intelligently and willingly, is placed before the amount collected. But experience proves that with the right kind of training, the gifts increase. A large proportion of the money is devoted to missionary objects. Each year the lessons course includes at least one series of missionary lessons. Where possible, the interest of the portion of the Field roused then is continued and deepened through collecting for some special aim. Junior children like to see the practical issue of their gifts, and to this end such special objects as pictures, books, lantern-slides make strong appeal.



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It was before He was twelve years old that Jesus of Nazareth laid good foundations in the small choices of every day, for the great "*I must*" which He uttered in the Temple.

It is the aim of the Junior Department to help the children to live and pray and love, as children may, believing and following and obeying the children's Friend.

*The Pass-it-on* Department of the World's Sunday School Association can always link a Junior department with a missionary having some specific need.

The Secretary of "*Pass-it-on*" Department (British Section) is Miss G. Edwards, Kilconquhar, Boyne Park, Tunbridge Wells.

## CHAPTER XII

### The Intermediate Department

By ERNEST H. HAYES

IN this department of the Graded School we gather all the scholars between the ages of twelve and fifteen. As was pointed out in Chapter IX., these three years of the scholar's life are the most critical in his development. They are the years of early adolescence, literally the intermediate age between childhood and manhood. It is not without significance that we call this "the awkward age," the time of the "hobbledehoy," and the "troublesome girl," for these scholars are neither children nor adults. These are the scholars who form a proper Intermediate Department in a fully graded school, as set out in a previous chapter.

It may be necessary to make clear that the term Intermediate Department is often used in a loose way for the major part of an ungraded school, where all scholars between Primary and Senior age are massed in a large schoolroom. However necessary this may be through force of local

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conditions, such a department must be regarded as a second-best or makeshift arrangement, pending the closer grading into Junior and Intermediate sections, which alone can yield the best results.

The merest tyro in Sunday School work will realise that in a proper Intermediate department of young adolescents, we have at once the most difficult and important piece of work that the Christian Church has to undertake. In no other branch of Christian work is there needed such patience, tact, ingenuity, perseverance, toleration, large-heartedness, and sanctified common-sense as is demanded for this task of holding the young adolescent to the Sunday School and winning him for Christ. At the same time it should be stated that no other Christian service offers such real delight, gives such solid satisfaction, or can show such excellent results as this. These points should be borne in mind in the following paragraphs.

In no department of the school is a knowledge of the psychology of the scholar of greater importance than now. The task of the Intermediate teacher is so difficult that he needs all the advantages offered by an intimate knowledge of the characteristics of the period, and he will consult books on the psychology of adolescence for the purpose of discovering those characteristics of the period that are useful assets for his work.

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It is impossible in one brief chapter to deal with this aspect of Intermediate work in any detail, but it is important to stress the point that while a knowledge of psychology can never take the place of sympathy, tact and commonsense—and still less can it be a substitute for spiritual power—it is a most useful aid in Intermediate work. The better we understand the adolescent, and the more we know of what is going on inside him, the easier will it be to find the right way of approach to him, the quicker we shall understand why we fail, and the surer will be our knowledge of when to press forward to grasp full success.

Remarkable physical change and quick growth are the most obvious of the characteristics of this period. An average boy of twelve, when entering the Intermediate department, weighs 77 lbs., but by the time he is fifteen and passes to the Senior department, his weight has increased to 177 lbs. ! Again, a girl at twelve has two-thirds of her adult weight, whereas at fifteen she will possess nine-tenths of it. Not only the sex organs but all the vital organs of the body develop at a great rate during this period, and seem to race towards maturity.

These great physical changes re-act on the mental and spiritual development, because all three are much more intimately related than is usually realised.

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Much mental storm and stress belong to this period, and to understand this will lead us to forgive much in adolescent behaviour. The emotional disturbances that accompany quick physical changes produce violent outbursts and great extremes in mood and disposition. At one moment your adolescent is soaring to the highest heavens, and a little later seems to be plunged in the nethermost hell of despair. To use the expressive language of the period, everything is "topping," or else he is "fed up."

The discerning teacher who understands the cause of this violent change will not take the adolescent too seriously—to understand much is to forgive much. During this unbalanced period we must be very sympathetic and lenient, seeking every opportunity to help the scholar in his difficult task of "finding himself" and of discovering and using his "controls."

A significance of this quick development for us is that it shows a conscious functioning of the will, and the sum of our difficulty is to learn how to control and train the scholar's will without his suspecting it. We have to teach him how to use his will and how to get full control of his rapidly developing powers. The worst thing we can do is to attempt to drive him, or to hedge him round with "don'ts."

This is the time when trouble arises in the

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school because the tactless teacher or superintendent pits the power of his authority against the stubborn self-will of the scholar. In all such contests the adult is sure to be beaten, even when he has gained a seeming victory—for you cannot drive the young adolescent to obedience or submission ; you will only drive him away altogether. The wiser way is to guide, not govern, and to let the scholar think he is governing, even while he is working along the line of your leadership.

Among the characteristics of the Intermediate age that can be appealed to and regarded as assets may be mentioned pride, or the desire to stand well in the opinion of others ; a love of nature, which may become a step up to God ; a dissatisfaction with the commonplace and the drab ; a hunger for the adventurous ; above all, a large capacity for hero-worship. “The chief value of great men is to fertilise the imagination of adolescents” is the pregnant saying of a psychologist. A craving for responsibility, a passion for loyalty, and an intense desire for freedom to develop, are features of adolescence that can be utilised for the highest ends, and give us the cue both for managing the scholar and arranging the department.

The two watchwords of Intermediate work, as can be seen from the foregoing, are *co-operation*

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and *concentration*. The department will be organised on lines that make the fullest possible use of the scholar himself, and the work of the teachers will be concentrated on adolescent needs. The externals of the department will include an assembly lobby that serves as an ante-chamber to the Intermediate hall, where the scholars will be trained to worship along adolescent lines, entirely separated from other departments. If the hall is large enough the class groups should be accommodated for teaching work around the side, leaving the centre free for the more devotional part of the session. For the latter, chairs that are arranged in a half-circle are in every way better than forms in straight rows, as this permits every scholar to sit comfortably in his chair and face the Leader. The alternating of boys' classes with girls' classes has been found much better in all respects than segregating boys and girls on either side. Classes should be kept small in size, a maximum of seven being the limit. For class teaching and expression work a class table should be provided.

The department as a whole should be organised on democratic lines as far as possible. A Scholars' Committee is a very useful feature, provided its members are properly elected, each class appointing its own representative. The Committee should hold regular meetings, presided

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over by the Department Leader (Superintendent). The teachers should not be present, as it is found by experience that they unconsciously override and overawe the scholars. The work of the Scholars' Committee will be governed by local conditions, and its decisions will be subject to the confirmation of the Teachers' Conference. The members of the committee will divide amongst themselves a great deal of the preparation work hitherto done by the secretary, viz., arranging and dusting chairs and tables, distribution of hymn-books and expression material, preparing notices, providing flowers for decoration and distribution to the sick, etc. Most useful of all, each committee representative will be responsible for the good order and behaviour of his own class, and will be a valuable ally of the Teacher in this, and in securing the regular and punctual attendance of the members. For department socials, week-night work, or forms of useful service the co-operation of the committee will be sought, and their ideas and opinions invited.

Not only will the department be organised with the co-operation of the scholars, but the class groups, particularly at the upper end of the department, can appoint their own officials, e.g., a registrar, a librarian, a treasurer, a visitor, a scout (to get new members), and a representative for the committee, etc. The aim here will be to



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appeal to, and utilise the characteristics of the scholar already described.

The weekly Teachers' Conference is almost as important as the Sunday afternoon session. While attendance at this is not compulsory, as in the Primary Training Class, every teacher will be expected to attend. As a matter of fact, the work of the Conference can usually be so arranged that a teacher finds it essential to be present, or else ask for particulars of the decisions arrived at, without which he would find it almost impossible to take his class on the following Sunday. As its name implies, the Conference is much more than either a Training or a Preparation Class. It is the teacher's opportunity of conferring with his colleagues on the general work of the department, and of helping to devise the best form of lesson outline, and methods of expression work, that the united gifts, knowledge and wisdom of all can produce. The teacher is not asked to attend the Conference in order to be given a lesson outline, or be told what he is to teach; rather, he is invited to add his quota to the work of the Conference, which is for pooling the resources of all. The Departmental Leader naturally presides, and after a devotional opening the session of the preceding Sunday is briefly reviewed for future guidance. The lesson for the following Sunday is then studied together, the central aim decided

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upon, an outline built up with the help of all present, and the form of expression work discussed. The Leader's part in the session will also be talked over, so that the teachers will know the line he will take in his Introductory talk that will precede the lesson, or, alternatively, his Supplemental talk that will follow it. It will be seen that if the work of the Teachers' Conference is properly done the teachers will not only find it of enormous benefit to their work, but a knowledge of its findings and results will be essential to their Sunday work.

The Sunday Session will be conducted by the Leader, after adequate preparation to ensure a spiritual atmosphere and a standard of worship that will in itself be a spiritual uplift to scholars and teachers. Every hymn and prayer will be carefully selected to ensure that it is on the plane of adolescent understanding and appeal. The Bible work will *not* be the lesson of the day—for that would cut away the ground from under the teacher's feet—but it will prepare the way for it. From his knowledge of the teaching aim and general outline of the class work, the Leader will be able to select a closing hymn that will intensify the spiritual note that has been running throughout the whole of the afternoon's work like a golden thread.

The lesson material used in this department

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is of supreme importance since it must be most carefully chosen to appeal to the special needs of this critical period. The guiding principles for the selection of Bible material can best be indicated here by quoting the aim of the Intermediate Course prepared by the British Lessons Council, which may be taken as typical of the lesson schemes provided for Intermediate work everywhere.

“To present during the Intermediate years :  
(i.) the great virtues, such as loyalty, chivalry, moral heroism, forgiveness, purity, etc., as embodied in those pre-Christian characters who prepared the way for Christ, in whom all the heroic qualities they revealed were seen to perfection.  
(ii.) Jesus as the Hero of Heroes, Who by His life of love, service, and self-sacrifice, met and overcame the powers of evil, inspiring His followers through the ages to exhibit the fruits of His spirit in their lives. Through such presentation, young adolescents are led to realise the power of Christ as “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,” and to show by their lives that they are making resolves and reaching such decisions as mark the adolescent period, and are consummated in their knowledge of Jesus as Saviour, Exemplar, and King.”

In this department we can build upon and develop the Bible work that has been done in the younger grades, giving the scholars a new and

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more vital interest in its familiar passages by showing them how the Book reached its present form and character under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We can also demonstrate how living and modern is the Old Book, because the story of God's dealings with men, and the triumphs of the Holy Spirit's work through men, have not ceased. By including in our Course lessons from the history of the Church through all ages, and from the triumphant story of the modern missionary enterprise, we not only show the Intermediate scholars that the book of Acts of the Apostles is still being written, but that the power of God can transform and work mightily through their own lives to-day.

Quite apart from psychology, memories of our own early adolescent years tell us that life is crowded with interests of the most diverse character at this stage. We cannot hope to touch more than the outer fringe of Intermediate interests if we confine our department work to Sunday afternoons only. Further, to limit ourselves to this not only imperils our ultimate success in winning the scholar for Christ, but tends to produce in him a false and poor conception of the Christian life, and seriously proscribes the claims of Christ on his rapidly developing interests and experiences.

The Intermediate Department of to-day must

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overflow into the scholar's week-day life, helping to permeate work and play, and social and recreational activity, with the religious spirit. The Intermediate scholar gets a larger and truer conception of the Christian life when he discovers that those who lead him in worship and teach him about Christ and the Kingdom are not only as good, but better leaders in business and sport because they have learned to "do all for the glory of God." Statistics prove that Intermediate Departments which concentrate only on Sunday work do not produce the best results even from a spiritual standpoint; on the other hand, departments which go to the other extreme and over-develop week-night work at the expense of the religious side, are not successful in either week-day activities or Sunday work. It has been proved that where both receive due attention, with the spiritual permeating the whole, a rich harvest can be gathered in well-developed young adolescents, strong in body, keen in mind, fervent in spirit, whose strong, clean and joyous young lives show what can be done for Christ and His Church through a well-organised Intermediate Department, staffed by workers manifesting the spirit and resource of the Master Himself.

## CHAPTER XIII

### The Senior Department

By J. OWEN CLOVER

ABOUT twenty years ago leaders in Religious Education were engaged in a great Sunday School Primary Department Campaign, and lecturers and demonstrators went up and down the country establishing Primary Departments and advocating what was then a new method in Sunday Schools. People generally began to see a vision of what might be, but all sorts of difficulties were raised—traditions, premises, leadership, etc., etc.—and many schools said re-organisation was impossible. Yet the seemingly impossible has happened, and nearly every school to-day has a Primary Department of some sort, though varying widely in efficiency.

To-day there is an equally insistent need for a similar campaign to establish Senior Departments. The problem is acute (we have been saying that for years) and the most hopeful sign is a widespread dissatisfaction with present conditions. Something must be done. Again we hear the old difficulties—traditions, premises, leadership—

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but the seemingly impossible must happen again. It will need brave and strong measures, it will mean much determination and effort, but we must at once discover what is needed and at all costs satisfy the needs of our adolescents. In doing so we shall be explorers and discoverers. We shall set out full of esteem for all work that has been and is being well done, but with open minds, willing to see a new and better way and refusing to be discouraged. Quite the most successful attempt made to face up to the problem was the Senior Commission whose report all should read.<sup>1</sup>

We need to create a departmental spirit just as unifying as that in the other departments. We shall not do our best work in divided groups.

This will include all the young people connected with our church over the age when they go to work (about fourteen and a half years of age). But they will need to be subdivided for discussions, etc., and the following divisions are usually recommended, though the ages will vary in different districts.

Men, 14½—18.

Women, ditto.

Men, 18—25.

Women, ditto.

All over 25.

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Senior Work*, N.S.S.U., 18.

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In large departments these will need to be divided again into groups or classes. Probably the former is a better name as adolescents regard a "group" as more important than a "class." The best form for the department to take cannot be stated at all dogmatically. It will have to vary with varying conditions. All sorts of experiments are being made to-day. There are Senior departments that are very much like P.S.A.s with disconnected addresses, and a popular appeal rather than an educational basis; on the contrary some are conducted as Adult Schools, and a great deal of thinking is being done. Very many churches leave the work to be done in Bible Classes, which usually meet quite separately, and are of one sex, though sometimes all the young people meet together in one big Bible Class. In our department at Bournville, we have groups which, though meeting together at the beginning of our worship spend much time in group discussion. Available premises vary, some people use the church, others small and dull classrooms. The size of the department often varies from 20 to 200 members, and there are departments catering for all types of adolescents—public school, secondary school, those early at work, besides workers of all kinds.

We may all, however, surely agree in one fundamental principle—that it is the adolescents' own department and they themselves must run it.



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The Committee of the Bournville Senior Department is elected by the members and usually stays in power for a year if it retains the confidence of the department (recently a vote of confidence was negatived and the Committee turned out !). They are made to feel it is their department and that they must assume responsibility. Nothing is done without consulting them. Our Sunday worship (orders of service, subjects, etc.) is discussed, week-day activities and service planned, and they feel and enjoy their responsibilities. What is true of government and organisation is also true of the conduct of the work. They assist in the services, run the socials and organise the games. When we talk of what our young people need and want it is so often what we think they need, or what we want for them. Even if the young people make mistakes it is worth while if they are forming a sense of responsibility and realising the results of their actions. Leadership surely involves this—if a real leader wants anything done he does not say so, he makes his members want that same thing, and so leads that they themselves suggest it ! It means, too, seeing their point of view and being sure they realise that we see it, showing that we ourselves are human and that we believe in them. Only by believing in them can we draw the best out of them. A leader always needs to see and know where he is

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leading. There is a great deal of indefiniteness abroad. We shall agree we are striving to lead our young people to love, know and serve Jesus Christ, but what does that involve? What is the Christian life or a Christian order of society?

Leadership is one of the problems of this, as of all departments. We shall need a leader not only for the department but also for each of the discussion groups. Senior workers are more and more realising the need for a regular Training class. Here they think their own ways through the problems for next Sunday and prepare for difficulties, as well as discuss the department and the individual members and talk over things that apply specially to them as Leaders. Of course they are all, *ex officio*, members of the General Committee.

Just as a leader needs an ideal, so the department as a whole needs its "Aim," and it is very much worth while to get this written down by the members themselves. Do not prepare it for them. It ought to express the real attitude of the department and should therefore be constantly altering and developing. Care should be taken to keep it an "aim," not a "creed," or "covenant" or "pledge." It will not be "taken" but read by the leader occasionally. The important part is that each department should find its own—we

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may get some rude shocks when we come to discuss with our members what they regard as their aim for the department. A Senior department leader needs to be one who can constantly stand shocks and surprises!

This "aim" will direct the lines of our work. Perhaps this work may be divided generally under three heads.

1. Helping the adolescent to discover his own conception of God.
2. Fostering his all-round development and determining his attitude to life.
3. Providing expression in service.

We need to discuss these in detail.

1. Studdert Kennedy tells that his first experience as a Padre in France was at a base hospital, where an invalid officer said to him, "Padre, what is God like?"

Our department is concerned with just this, we shall plan to that end. We want the members to discover God through the things man has made by the combined effort of brain and manipulative skill as well as through nature, which constantly shows forth God and His purpose.

Surely, too, we shall help our young people to realise that all real joy and happiness, all pure fun and merriment, are the result of the God in

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us and so help them to feel that joyfulness is in His worship. In our Senior Department we are definitely trying to show the God in all men. We shall use as illustrations men like Tyndale Biscoe, who by discovering God in Kashmiri youths, made "men out of jellyfish." We want our members to realise the God in themselves also. Supremely we shall show God revealed in the Bible and in Jesus Christ.

The Bible is, of course, the centre of all our teaching, but there are two distinct ways of using it, both of which have exponents. Some people take the Bible in portions and draw lessons and guidance therefrom. These are generally planned in advance and it often happens that certain problems are therefore not dealt with at the psychological moment when they are most needed. Others plan the problems and subjects that at the moment are fundamental to the young people, and use the Bible as the answer to the questions raised and its spirit as the solution to the problems of to-day. Our aim is to create a great love and reverence for the Bible and an attitude of mind in our young people that will make them turn to it at all times.

We shall have to discuss frankly with them problems of the Bible itself and a reasonable and reasoned approach to it. In order that our young folk may find God revealed we must show them

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its unfolding and developing revelation, and by study of the background, conditions, and development of the writers and people, help them to trace the way men came to know God.

Recently in our department when the Committee were planning the next course of lessons they asked for work on "the People of the Old Testament—but please don't mention the Kings, we are tired of them." This may show a general if unexpressed attitude of mind. We were able through the development of the nation itself and the life of the people to show God's purposes being worked out through the pages of the Old Testament. Another series of Sunday afternoons was spent in taking the Bible to other countries. We gave a little time to making it readable and cheap here by means of translation and printing, and then selected other countries such as India, Japan, Madagascar, North-West Canada, Central Africa, etc. Each afternoon we devoted ten minutes to a background talk about the country and its problems, and then in our groups discussed the taking of the Bible to the country and the effects it had had. Usually we finished our department together by a short yarn on some particular person of the country to show how his life had been changed through the coming of the Bible. By showing effects the Bible had had we were able to show the Bible in a new light—its power, message

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and inspiration—and we all gained a greater reverence for it.

As there are various ways of using the Bible in our departmental services, so we are all by differing means striving to “bring young men and women to Christ—into such close communion with Him that He becomes their Friend and Saviour, and the inspiration of their life ; till He so dwells in them that His life is theirs.”<sup>1</sup> Our teaching will be direct or indirect, planned and spontaneous. For instance (if there is any need to apologise for such repeated reference to one’s own work—I do so) we were recently discussing the world’s great religions, finding out what in them seemed to us to fall short of Christianity, as well as trying to discover what we might learn from them. One afternoon we were discussing Confucius when one youth said—“He shouldn’t have been in my footer team !” Immediately we asked “Why not ?” and went on to discuss the qualifications for a good player—the team spirit much more than an ability to shoot straight—and considered Confucius in this light. Then we said—“Would you want Christ in your team ?” There was some hesitation at first, and then we saw that no man ever had the team spirit so finely developed as He had, and we agreed that He represented exactly the type we wanted. In such ways we are

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Senior Work*, already mentioned.

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all helping Seniors to feel Christ as their comrade, as the answer to their problems and difficulties, as their Beloved Captain.

But there will also be the direct teaching. We sometimes take His life in broad sweeps as it is found that we can give more living pictures of Him in this way. Occasionally, too, we take His life in detail, emphasising the Christ-like answer to modern problems and difficulties as revealed by parables and His whole attitude to life.

Probably one of our biggest tasks is to help young people to think their own way through problems and difficulties that they are bound to have thrown against them, and to do it at the moment it is needed. This will apply to social and moral problems (a year ago gambling was not a real difficulty in our department, suddenly office sweepstakes came up as a burning problem); to Biblical difficulties (the old ones of Jonah and Daniel, etc.); to questions about Christ (virgin birth, resurrection, miracles, etc.). To leave these problems unsolved may mean that we lose from our Churches those who cannot give a satisfactory answer when challenged.

Surely any question that is concerned with "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," or "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is our concern.

In order to make our Sunday services times of

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real worship and approach to God and opportunities to discover Him and His revelations, we need to bear in mind several things. For instance, the atmosphere is all important—as much here as in any department, though it may well differ. We shall want reverence, but not strict discipline, the order that arises from real interest, a joining together in the business of the afternoon. The room, pictures, flowers, etc., will affect this. The difference a real, lovely picture makes is most marked. The leader's attitude is very infectious. Difficulties will probably come from one or more of the older adolescents. Details like the notices, offertory (never called a "collection"—the word lowers its dignity as an expression), etc., may help or hinder. We find a period of silence at the beginning (and often at the end) of our service will greatly help. The worship should be linked on to the week's happenings. It is part of life and not an isolated and self-contained thing.

Hymns should also be sung for some purpose and an explanation of the hymn, a description of its writer, and the conditions and reasons of its writing, will greatly help.

Prayer time is probably the most difficult part of our service. How can we help adolescents really to pray together? It is easy for one person to say words or pray himself, it is generally



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comparatively easy to have periods of silence, but corporate prayer is a great difficulty. Apart from silent prayer perhaps the suggested prayer is the most helpful provided that the suggestions are confined to a few closely allied subjects. Occasionally a carefully prepared and typed-out liturgical order of service has been found very useful.

Consideration of our Sunday services naturally brings up the question of lesson courses. It is scarcely too sweeping a statement to say that there is no course in use really suitable for adolescents up to about eighteen or twenty. Probably the Junior Adult School Handbooks which were for several years published are the best things to recommend. For Senior adolescents there is the course planned by the British Lessons Council with notes in the *Senior Quarterly*, published by the N.S.S.U., and in *Teachers and Taught*, and also the Adult School Handbook. Biographies, missionary and social subjects will appeal to all ages. But why not draw up courses for our own department in consultation with the young people themselves? This will grow easier with experience, and is surely best of all; as one can then be certain of dealing with really vital problems.

Perhaps the greatest test of any lesson or discussion is the question: "What ideal did it

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give ? ”—“ Was it full of purpose, urge, and force for life ? ”

2. Under our second heading of LIFE we must include everything that vitally affects our young people's lives, their all round development. We want to help them to understand life, its purpose and possibilities ; to see the way other folk live and the resulting difficulties and temptations to them. We want men and women who live fully and become people who count in the world. Recently a certain boarding school was recommended to a parent because its boys even on leaving seemed men of experience, men who had travelled, who knew what life meant, and were in the thick of it. In a sense that is true also of our Senior Departments, though we want our members to be facing the life they know as Christ would have faced it.

To ensure this we need to plan for their Intellectual, Social and Physical development, not as ends in themselves, but as means to an end, which is the development of an ability to express themselves in service. For instance, the question of amusements is very pressing just now. Is it not our duty to cultivate the taste of our young people ? If we are practical we must most of us agree that our young people are already going to cinemas, theatres, etc., and we shall be most anxious to guide them in their choice. A list of

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the best places and "shows" is very much worth preparing. Certainly we ought to make friends with a local cinema manager. We want folk who can live in the world, and not glass-house people!

We are now thinking mainly of week-day activities without which a Senior Department cannot do the best possible work. The amount we undertake will depend upon how far the needs are already being catered for, how much time we ourselves have at our disposal, and how many other people can be roped in.

*Intellectual* development can be helped in a good many ways. For instance:

Reading circles (consult Home Reading Union); Pageants (to be obtained from various denominational Young People's Departments) and Plays (the National Adult School Union publish some very good ones); Study Circles and Tutorial Classes (which have a three-fold plan—lecture, discussion, writing of papers—particulars from Educational Settlements Association, 30, Bloomsbury Street, W.C.1); investigations of social conditions, and "Questions of Citizenship" (Adult School Union); public speaking (debates, impromptu speaking, mock Parliaments, mock Trials, mock Lord Mayor's Banquets, etc.); magazines; hobbies (according to finance and instruction available); visits to museums, galleries,

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works, etc., "our jobs" evening, when each describes his day's work ; or, if possible, a week-end conference on some subject.

*Physical* development may include all team games, also tennis, badminton (indoors), swimming, country dancing, gymnasium, with boxing, sports day, etc. Also classes given by doctors or nurses on hygiene, first aid, sex, etc. The question of sex is most important and must be adequately dealt with personally and in groups. There are advantages and disadvantages in belonging to one of the big national organisations (Scouts, Guides, Brigades, etc.), and the question needs very careful facing according to local conditions.

Sports grounds, including gardens and children's play-grounds, which whole families may join, have been found by several people to be a financial possibility and a tremendous success. People will pay for such facilities.

The *Social* development of the Seniors has created great discussion, mainly because we have shown the wrong attitude and that is always reflective. Here toleration is dangerous. A whole-hearted enthusiasm for the spirit of comradeship amongst our young people and the provision of opportunities for mixing the sexes decently are absolutely essential. No leader can do his best work without social opportunities with the members.

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Some people are faced with a heavy responsibility because they are driving young people to do perfectly harmless things in a harmful way. For instance, it may be our task to provide dancing (delightful in itself) without dangerous associations. At least we must with an open mind face the needs of our young people. And on Church premises it ought surely to be easiest to maintain the right tone.

Perhaps the best means for real social development are socials; Club premises (with canteen, quiet room, reading, games, etc.), excursions, rambles, holidays, camps, etc., fireside talks.

But these are worse than dangerous without a strong personality at their head.

3. Our Senior department should be a "*Training ground for service*," and it is well to start a simple "Bureau of Service" to introduce work and workers. We shall also have our "Active Service List," prominently displayed on Sundays, giving names of those who cannot be there because they are teaching in school, etc. The staffing of the Primary Department is essentially our concern, but we need to satisfy ourselves that the Primary Training Class more than compensates for the department service they have lost. Those teaching are still our members, but away doing our work.

We shall also seek to serve the Church, primarily perhaps by bringing our members into

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Church fellowship and membership. Means will vary in differing denominations, but we shall always be leading our members into the Church. We shall serve also by missionary exhibitions, etc., and village or down-town work, crèches (during communion services), guarding children in bed on Sunday evenings while parents go to church, bath-chair brigades, care of grounds, secretarial jobs (names on pews for instance); stewarding at the church services, etc. This last is very valuable and means assisting at first.

Our department will also serve the neighbourhood. The training of real citizens is a big piece of our work. We shall assist moral and social reforms, provide entertainments, do some visiting and other things, and above all cultivate a right attitude to our fellowmen.

Lastly, the *organisation* of our department needs a few words. We have already spoken of the Committee. Our government will be much like that of the British Empire—we shall have Home Rule for all details, but co-operation with the Church and the rest of the school in whatever affects us all.

Finance is a big question. We ought not to expect to have everything done for us, and yet our Sunday offertories will go to help the Missionary and other causes as the expression of our afternoon's worship. It is impossible to dogmatise

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here and workers must often abide by local traditions and conditions. Premises too are hard to talk of in general—in many ways the church is the best place, as it links on to the other Sunday services.

Perhaps the best way to create a united department where the work is isolated and separate is to unite on some big bit of work and gradually get attached. Unity on Sunday will follow as a natural outcome.

To return to our original purpose—we seek to understand the Adolescent, and let him know that we understand him. We must then evolve a department that will meet the needs of his own individual development, that will form the right attitude to life and result in service; above all a department that will help him to discover his God.

It can be done; it is being done. This is our Crusade. May the Glasgow Conference give us a big impetus.

## CHAPTER XIV

### The Transition to Bible Class and Church Membership

By SYDNEY CAVE, D.D.

By common consent the most serious failure of the modern Church is its failure to retain more than a small proportion of those that pass through our Sunday Schools. It is not that the Church does not grip the masses. It is a worse tragedy. We grip them, and then let them go. If all who have been in our Sunday Schools were in the Churches, we should hear little more of small congregations.

On the Mission Field, it is a commonplace of strategy that a missionary's effort should be concentrated on the young. We need to learn the same wisdom here. It is hard indeed to win older folk for Christ, and for its failure here the Church is only partly responsible. It is not true that men needs must love the Highest when they see it. If it were, the Church's task would be an easy one. Most older folk are too set in their ways, too absorbed in their interests, to welcome the call of Christ to follow Him. But youth is more



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responsive to the call of the Highest. We may feel that the *questionnaire* method has been overdone, but it is clear, from the statistics collected, that the vast majority of stable Christians have decided for Christ before they were twenty years of age. The adolescent years, the "'teens," as we call them, are the critical years of life. Most men become what then they choose to be.

The adolescent years are years of unrest, and unsettlement. Most of us older folk, when we look back on the years of our "'teens," realise how crude we were. How harshly we condemned the faults of our elders, how severely we criticised the forms of Christianity in which we had been brought up. Life seemed simple then, and so our judgments were hard and cruel. Yes, but it was then that we responded most quickly to the call of the highest. Most of the poetry a man knows and loves he learnt to appreciate in his adolescent years. It is then, if ever, that great literature begins to exercise its spell. There is, in these years, a readiness to respond to new ideals, and to the call of the heroic, for not, as yet, is there the fatal obstacle of preoccupation.

No wisdom of men can secure conversion. That is God's work and depends on personal obedience to God's call. But we can do much to make that decision for God less hard to take. It is our business to clear the road to Christ, to

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remove stumbling blocks from the way of His little ones. And in this service there is needed the co-operation of home, and school, and Church, and minister.

We have a right to expect the help of the home. Sometimes parents who are outside the Church hinder less than those within. I have often heard Christian people complain that their young people do not join the Church when it would be strange, indeed, if they did. What attraction is there for young people in joining the Church if they find that their parents see in the obligation of Church membership more a burden than a privilege, or if they hear their parents complaining of the deficiencies of their minister, and the inconsistencies and failings of other members of the Church? Unpremeditated words convey more than formal advice, and, if parents would have their young people join the Church, they need themselves to show that they prize its fellowship and gospel.

Here it is with the Sunday School that we are chiefly concerned. It has done much in the past. It can do still more in the future. The work of the Sunday School is of such supreme importance that no loyalty to old ways can be allowed to check its progress. Some lessons indeed we all have learnt. No modern school attempts to treat young people as if they were children, or is content

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that they should study the same lesson as those in the junior classes. We all of us see Christ from the standpoint of our own needs, and the needs of the adolescent are very different from those of the child. But the problem is not solved simply by having graded lessons. Many of our Sunday Schools have failed just where some Christian homes have failed. We hold the children when they are at an age when they will learn and obey. We lose grip on the young people who have begun to judge for themselves, and to judge with the inevitable confidence of youth; that confidence which often appears arrogant, just because of its real self-diffidence. None is so conscious of being "old" as those who, just out of childhood, have not yet reached adult years. It is fatal to treat such as children. Discipline has to give place to leadership, and even instruction has to be co-operative and suggestive. The best teacher for these years is the man or woman who is thought of less as a teacher than as a "chum." No one can help young people who is not himself young. And that is not a question of years. Some are too old at thirty. Others are young enough at twice that age. We can do nothing for young people unless we are ready to look at life with their eyes. The man who is "prim," easily shocked, conventional in speech and outlook, may do useful service in other spheres, but not in this.

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For work among young people, freshness and courage, readiness to face realities, and to enter into others' needs, are indispensable qualifications.

In the transition to Bible Class and Church Membership we seem still to be in the stage of experiment, and there is, so far as my observation goes, no uniformity of organisation. Circumstances vary much in different neighbourhoods, and what is possible in a great Church situated in a populous area may be impossible in a country Church, or in a Church where most of the young people remain at school till they are eighteen years of age. The bulk of those in our Sunday Schools go to the Elementary Schools, and so have to go out to work at a very early age. It is sad that such should be the case—that boys and girls should be thrust into life, to face its perils at an age when those in Secondary Schools are under that wise guidance which leads them gently through that most difficult stage of development, the years between fifteen and eighteen. We have an immense responsibility for such, and must, at all costs, seek to retain our hold on them for Christ.

In the South of England, at least, where education is not popular, many Churches find that they hold young people between fifteen and eighteen to the School best if they drop the word "School" and speak instead of a "Young People's Institute," which is distinct from the

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ordinary Sunday School, though closely associated with it. Such an Institute does on Sundays the work of what in other Churches are called Bible Classes. But it is more than a Sunday School. It is a fellowship which seeks to meet week-day needs. Young people at work during the day, and with their evenings free, need more than Sunday instruction. They need to find in their Institute a home where they can have the requirements of their growing life recognised and met. A boy of fifteen goes to work at an office or factory where it is thought "manly" to bet, and where talk is often foul. He is at an age when he is responsive to environment, and when it is very hard to stand alone. While his more fortunate brother is still at school, with work to do which draws out all his powers, and with sport to appeal to his team-spirit, he is engaged in work which is often mechanical and monotonous, and in which it is usually impossible for him to express much of his latent powers. That is where the Institute can help. It is useless to denounce wrong practices. Instead of repression, there has to be what the psychologists call "sublimation," the turning of natural instincts into higher channels. It is the unoccupied mind which is the breeding ground of evil, and, with our modern industrialism, there are many unoccupied minds.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the previous chapter for practical suggestions.

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For young people at school until they are eighteen or nineteen the problem is different. Their week days are full of healthy occupation and it is unwise to make much demand upon their time. But they ought to feel that they, too, have in the Junior Bible Class or Institute their place. The worst enemy of Christianity in our land to-day is not scepticism, or even indifference ; it is class consciousness. And class-consciousness ought not to be recognised, far less fostered, by our Churches. Yet in how many "Middle-class" Churches it is assumed that the Sunday School is only—to use the odious cant-term—for the children of the "poor." The children of the congregation have nothing to do with it. It is not surprising that, in such Churches, those who have passed through the Sunday School feel that the Church is not for them, whilst the Young People of the Congregation find Christianity conventional and unattractive. Such divisions ought not to exist without protest. The young people still at day schools have little time for week-day activities, but our Junior Bible Classes or Institutes ought to contain them both. Each would learn from the other. Those at work would gain something from those at school. Those at school would gain at least as much from those at work, for they would come closer to some of the hard realities of life, and be saved from that

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narrowness of outlook which is the bane of some of our well-to-do Churches.

What of young men and women over eighteen years of age? In many of our South of England Churches the only class for such is a Young Women's Class for those in domestic service. Such classes have done great work, and our Churches owe an immense debt to the women who lead these classes, and make themselves the friends and counsellors of those who, by the conditions of their lives, are often very lonely and friendless. But it would be a great gain if, in all populous areas, at least, there could be Senior Bible Classes, such as are common in Wales, and also, to an extent, in the North. Young men and women need help and guidance, and they gain this best through self-expression under wise leadership in classes where they can discuss with frankness the problems of faith and conduct which perplex so many in our post-war world. Whether such classes are better taken by the minister or not depends much on denominational practice and local needs. The minister has the advantage of his professional equipment. A layman can make of such a class his one great work for Christ, and can often bring a fresher insight into the practical difficulties of life.

Circumstances vary so greatly that generalisations are fallacious, and can easily be unjust. But

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there is the problem common to all work among Young People from fifteen years upwards—the supreme problem of Church Membership. The School or Institute is not an end in itself. It exists to serve the Church, as the Church itself exists to serve God's Kingdom. However apt and interesting may be the teaching, however varied the provision for social needs and recreation, we have failed unless we lead our young people to that definite dedication of their lives to Christ which finds expression in joining His Church. At what age should we look for this? I do not think a definite answer is possible or desirable. We cannot standardise conversion. And young people differ much in their maturity. Teachers, in conjunction with the minister, need to know their young people one by one—to know them well enough to know when the time of decision has come. There is a double peril. It is possible by emotional appeals to get young folk to think they have decided before they have. I have known some resentful in after life and complaining even that they were trapped. It is possible to be too cautious and to delay the time too long. I notice as I read the answers of candidates coming before our College, that most commonly it was at about the age of sixteen that the full decision for Christ was made, and that is often the appropriate time for joining the Church.



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Some make adequate decision still earlier. Others are slower to respond. Whether young people should be given the responsibilities of voting at Church meetings before they are eighteen, has to depend largely on Church customs, or even on Trust deeds. But, when they have decided definitely to serve Christ, why should they not join the Church at sixteen, or even in some cases earlier, and thus ratify by public confession their solemn choice and win the confidence that comes from knowing that they have definitely declared themselves to be Christ's disciples, that they belong to His Church, and share in the inspiration and the joy of meeting with Him at the Communion Service, His special trysting place ?

No one should join the Church lightly, or without understanding its full implicates. The teacher here has to work in conjunction with the Minister, of whose Communicants' Class we will speak later. And it should be made clear that to join the Church is not an end, but a beginning. It means sharing in a fellowship of service. And the Bible Class or Institute ought gladly to spare those of its members who have joined the Church for service in the Primary Department, or in other work of the school where they can help.

I have written of the work of the Bible Classes or Institute with deliberate vagueness. The problems of holding our Young People and

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winning them to Christ, are too complex to be expressed in neat and simple formulæ. Much as needs and circumstances differ, there is one supreme task in all such work. It is to express Christ as the living actual Lord, and Christianity as the one answer to all men's needs. It is a work of tremendous difficulty. The leader in such work needs all the help he can get from books that he may make the Bible vivid and fresh, and reveal Christianity as a potent force, not only nineteen hundred years ago, but in our modern world; able still to make heaven and saints, and to convert pagan peoples to the glad service of a God of Love. But Christ is preached more by lives than by words. Young People need friendship and understanding. They need, still more, contact with those whose lives have been made anew by Christ. And, whether he be well read or not, the teacher who can meet these needs will not altogether fail. "One loving heart sets another heart afire."

The work of the School needs to be supplemented by that of the Church. The School has the right to receive from the Church not only money, but its strongest men and women,<sup>1</sup> and teachers might well be set apart to their work by a solemn service of dedication. But more

<sup>1</sup> I would refer here to Principal Clow's chapter on "The Relation of the Sunday School to the Church."

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than this is required. To our young people, "joining the Church" means joining the Church they know in the particular congregation with which they are connected. And by that congregation Christ's Church will be judged. It is far easier to get them to respond to big things than to small. And if the Church is to win the allegiance of the young people they must feel that it is concerned with big things. Older folk often complain of the pleasure-seeking of the young. To criticise pleasure, as pleasure, merely estranges and annoys. It is useless to condemn. What is needed is that they should hear the clamant calls of Christ's Kingdom, that, putting the first thing first, all else may take its proper place. Only a congregation which cares supremely for that Kingdom has the right to expect its young people to join its fellowship. A Church where there is bickering and snobbery makes no appeal to those who have not yet learnt to be content with compromises and the second best. If a Church would win its young people to confess Christ by joining its communion, it must itself be Christian; its members must show that they care supremely for the Christian fellowship, and are ready to subordinate themselves to the Christian task. For such a Church will make Christ real.

And last, and not least, is the opportunity of

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the Minister. Part of our failure to win for the Church the young people of the Sunday School has been due to the undue separation of the School from the Church. The School is not an end, but a means to the full communion of the Church. Its work is part of the teaching function of the Church. In many Churches the League or Union of Young Worshippers has helped to provide the necessary link. Children pledge themselves to attend Church regularly, and, at the morning service, have not only their own address and hymn, but their own prayer, expressive of their needs. From the first they learn to think of the minister as their minister, and the Church as something in which they have a part. Every month, or every quarter, they meet with the minister for tea and games, and, if any of them are away from Church for more than a Sunday at a time, the minister is informed and calls to ask the reason why. Where such is done the transition from the School to Church membership is easier, for the young people have learnt, when children, to know the minister, who to them is the symbol of the Church, and to think of him as a friend. And young people are won through friendship. Preaching alone is not enough. Preaching and personal intercourse are inextricably connected. A lad will tell his minister of his difficulties, if the minister reveals himself in his preaching as a true

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man, one able to understand. And equally he will listen to his minister's preaching if he has in him one whom he knows and trusts.

In some Churches a young and athletic minister has been able to win his lads to him by football and cricket clubs. It is not given to every man to be an athlete, and, if a minister play very badly, he had probably better not play at all. But it is possible for a minister to win the respect of even his most athletic lads without being himself an athlete. After all, the prime requirement of manhood is to know one's job, and the minister who obviously cares supremely for the Gospel, and can present it as actual and real, is not likely to lack the confidence of his young people, if they know they have in him a friend. In their perplexities and questionings he can help as no one else. And no part of a man's work can bring such satisfaction and encouragement as this. Many ministers find that they cannot manage to take Bible Class on Sundays, and it is often better for others to do this work. But I notice that it is our very busiest ministers who find time to have, as occasion requires, a class leading up to Church membership. To such a class the minister invites by personal invitation, after consultation with the Bible Class leaders, those of his young people who are not far from the Kingdom. Such a class meeting five or six times, preferably in the

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minister's study, can discuss such problems as these. What is our authority in Christianity? Who was Jesus Christ? What did He do for us? What is the Church? What is the meaning of the Sacraments? and so, last of all, what following Christ and joining the Church involves. The value of such a class will depend very largely on the extent to which a minister already knows the young people who attend it, and has their confidence. Such work takes time, but no work brings such re-invigoration and new zest for service. Many a minister finds that his friendship with his young people is the most cheering and delightful part of his Church life, and no reward of his work brings such lasting joy as to know that he has helped some of his young friends to dedicate their lives to Christ.

## CHAPTER XV

### The Staffing of the Sunday School

By GEORGE HAMILTON ARCHIBALD

“IT never rains roses,

If you want more roses you must plant more trees.”

If the Christian Church is ever going to grow roses it must plant trees. The Sunday School is an excellent rose bed, but its planting and its nurturing has been sadly neglected.

Roses must be planted in the winter time ; that is partly why they are so neglected. The gardener must have faith in the future, he must be willing to do his hardest work in cold and unpromising weather. There are many Sunday Schools which are looking for teachers for next Sunday ; theirs is a hopeless case. Rose trees are planted for the future, not for to-morrow.

The staffing of the Sunday School is of supreme importance. Any suggestions the writer has to make are based partly on theory but chiefly on experience as a Sunday School Superintendent in one School.

# The Staffing of the Sunday School

## I. THE PERSONNEL.

The staff consists of the following :

1. THE SUPERINTENDENT.
2. THE SECRETARY-TREASURER.
3. THE HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS.
4. THE DEPARTMENT ASSISTANTS.
5. THE HELPERS AND TEACHERS.

The Superintendent of the modern Sunday School needs different qualifications from the Superintendent of the Sunday School of yesterday. The latter aimed to secure a man gifted with the powers of speech, more or less of a teacher, capable of keeping order, and able to preside—indeed possessing most of the capabilities of a teacher, preacher, and leader—but the modern Sunday School needs an organiser, a business man, one who is not fond of appearing in public ; one who knows the art of setting other people to work. He must encourage his staff and protect them from every interruption and annoyance. He need not be very much of a teacher, but must be a man of good sense and judgment.

The Secretary-Treasurer should be a worthy assistant of the Superintendent. A man of figures, a man of method, he must keep the records, the minutes, call meetings, take care of the money, make up his reports, see to it that the teachers look after absent scholars, etc., etc.



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But while the success of the school depends to a very considerable extent on the organising ability of the Superintendent and Secretary, it is upon the heads of departments that the real teaching work of the School depends. Medium sized modern schools are divided into the following departments :

Cradle Roll, Beginners', Primary, Junior, Intermediate and Senior. To these may be added a Parents' Department, and other specialised adult forms of organisation. Each one of these groups must have its leader, that is obvious. The leaders are in full charge of their departments. They lead their group, and do a good deal of direct teaching. They also lead the weekly training class, and not only prepare the weekly lesson but train future teachers. Each group must have beside the teachers, its assistant leader, its secretary, its pianist, and its door-keeper.

All this means that the modern Sunday School needs two or three times as many officers and teachers as the Sunday School of yesterday, and this is where the newer methods score. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The church's strength lies largely, not in its worshippers, but in its workers.

I should like to see a congress of the Churches called to discuss the problem: "What Christian social service can we find for young people?"

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For we must harness the enthusiastic activities of our youth. There is plenty of power in the Church, but it is wasting. My mother used to say, "Boys, if your tea isn't sweet stir it. There is plenty of sugar in it—stir it."

The problem of the Church is that of finding work, not workers. At this point the modern Sunday School can claim to be soundly based on the teaching of the New Testament—"I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." I know one Sunday School that has a teacher or officer to every three scholars.

The first step in the staffing of the School is to secure capable heads of departments. To say to the ordinary school sadly lacking in workers that they must find twice or thrice as many more before they can do their best work, sounds like a counsel of perfection. But as a matter of fact it is easier to get more than to carry on with fewer. It is a matter of organisation and method. Most schools are failing to use what talent they have to the best advantage. I know one school that had eighty children in a so-called Infants' Class. Among their teachers was a trained and capable lady who was teaching a class of sixteen to eighteen year old girls. They were persuaded to experiment—a fine room was secured. The lady teacher was appointed leader of the Primary Department.

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Most of the girls became helpers, nearly as many big boys joined the group. A week-evening preparation and training class was instituted, and to-day that department is going strong with twenty-five classes of three or four children each. The young teachers remain about three years in the Primary and then pass on to the Junior and Intermediate grades. Gradually that school is growing a teaching staff and from that teaching staff new leaders are being recruited and trained. Where before the new methods came into being there were five teachers to eighty scholars, there are now over twenty-five, and the difference in order, reverence, and atmosphere, to say nothing of improvement in teaching is almost incredible. The seemingly impossible has easily become possible; it is a question of organisation and method and leadership.

### II. THE SOURCE OF SUPPLY.

Just as the rose garden annually needs new trees so must the Sunday School be continually restocked. The old fashioned Sunday School depended on chance for its supply. Continual appeals were made from the pulpit, signals of distress were constantly being sent up. But we must not hope to gather teachers like wild roses off the hillsides, nor expect teachers from here, there and everywhere. Occasional help may come from

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outside sources, but the chief supply will be from among the older scholars, those who have passed through the grades and are more or less in sympathy with its aim and purpose. In one school I know the Senior Department occasionally adjourns its session to give the scholars an opportunity of watching in the children's departments. In this way they became attracted to the teaching work. All schools properly graded and led by competent leaders get recruits without difficulty and usually have a waiting list. The modern Sunday School has proved beyond all question that the teacher problem can be solved by good organisation and leadership. It is not a matter of theory, it is a matter of fact.

### **III. TRAINING RECRUITS.**

It is one thing to secure recruits, it is another to train them. This problem is solved by instituting training classes. In all thoroughly organised and well-graded Sunday Schools the weekly training class is fundamental. This training class is led by the leader of the department. Sometimes the minister of the Church attempts a general training class for all the teachers in the School, but such a class usually takes the form of Bible exegesis. Now a class for Bible exegesis may be of first-rate importance, but it cannot take the place of a teacher training class.

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Bible exegesis has no very close connection with work for little children. The problem is not so much understanding the Scripture, as adapting it. While, of course, specialists may be brought into the training class and sometimes may be very helpful, it is found in practice that the leader of the department must do most of the teacher training work, and this teacher training work consists to a very considerable extent of understanding child nature, discussing the problems of the individual teacher as well as those of the department as a whole. The problems of the Intermediate group are mostly different from those of the Primary group, and no single class can hope to supply the needs of all the grades. The class is much more than a mere preparation class. It is a training class and its ramifications are far and wide.

It is by no means established that the Primary Department is the only place where recruits can begin, but so far experience has proved it to be the best place. Now if this is so it is of the utmost importance that the Primary Department should be staffed by a leader of ability and culture. The establishment of Westhill Training College in the first place grew out of the needs of the Primary Department leader for training. There is no office in the gift of the Church where greater skill and tact are necessary, for the leader must not only be

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a teacher of children, but a teacher of teachers as well.

## IV. MOBILITY AND LOYALTY.

The staff of the Sunday School working under its Superintendent must act like one man. The Sunday School must be united, but more than that it must be mobile. Every leader and teacher must be loyal not only to his own department, but loyal to the school as a whole. Here is where so many schools fail, and it is just at this point that a partially graded Sunday School breaks down. Every grade must be well staffed; the teachers who have spent their allotted time, usually three years, in the Primary Department, must go on to the Junior department, not only as a matter of duty, but as a matter of pleasure. It must always be understood that teachers cannot remain in one department for longer than a given time. This, of course, does not apply with equal force to the Intermediate and Senior Grades, as it does in the Primary and Junior. If teachers of, say twenty-five years of age, are kept in the Primary Department the leader will have difficulty in getting the fifteen and sixteen year old recruits, and the twenty-five year old teacher will not be very happy working with the new ones. Beside that, the presence of such different ages makes the task of the leader of the training class impossible.

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There must be constant changes taking place in the school staff ; they must move from place to place as the Superintendent and his cabinet may direct. Mobility—Loyalty, these are two qualities of imperative importance. Every member of the staff must be willing to sacrifice first for the good of the individual group and afterward for the good of the whole school. “ A family divided against itself cannot stand.” There should be a staff meeting at least once a week. The Superintendent’s cabinet is made up of the Superintendent, the Secretary and the heads of departments, and its deliberations should be as frequent as they are important.

The above does not mean that leaders of departments should frequently be changed about. For the most part they remain stationary, though at times changes may be wisely made, but it does mean that scholars and teachers are expected to move from lower to higher grades very frequently.

It never rains roses. The man who prays that it may will lose faith in the efficacy of prayer. It will never rain Sunday School teachers, nor superintendents, nor leaders of departments. If the Church of God wants roses it must plant more trees.

## CHAPTER XVI

### The Recruiting of Sunday School Scholars

By J. WILLIAMS BUTCHER

IF the outflow tap from a cistern be opened and it is needful that the cistern be not emptied, then it follows that the inflow tap must also be open. It is also desirable that inflow should be somewhat in excess of outflow, for then the cistern can be kept full, and it is a simple thing to stop the flow when this result is attained. The outflow tap of the Sunday School is always open. Removals, deaths, lapses from various causes, tend steadily to thin our ranks. It has been said "the Sunday School is ever growing at one end and dying at the other." It is because of this that "Recruiting" becomes so important a part of the considered programme of the well-ordered School. The Superintendent or Secretary who trusts to chance to bring new scholars to take the place of those who have left will soon find that the number on the roll is growing less and less, quarter by quarter. It sometimes happens that when at the Annual Business Meeting the



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figures for the year are read, the revelation of decrease causes dismay. This need not be. Decrease can only be justified by circumstances that are unusual and that therefore affect but few Schools. Under normal conditions the numerical strength should increase or be at least fairly stationary. To help to this end is the purpose of this chapter.

It seems wise to state plainly a few general facts that affect our enrolment before dealing with definite plans for "Recruiting."

1. In days gone by the force of Parental Compulsion kept the School full with a steady supply of children. Boys and girls were "sent to Sunday School." Those whose feet rarely crossed the threshold of the church deemed it a wise thing that their young folk should be in the school. This only obtains to a limited extent to-day. "They can please themselves whether they go or not," is the answer that often rewards the interest of the teacher looking after his absentee scholar. The attitude of the "masses" towards Organised Religion is frequently that of open antagonism and where this is the case the children are forbidden the Christian School.

2. Having largely lost the aid of "Parental Compulsion" we must find a substitute. It lies in the "Magnetic Charm of the School itself." The dull routine that repels must give place to the

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programme that attracts. The Sunday session, aided by varied week-day activities, must draw where the parents of yesterday would drive. The change in educational method has of late years been very great and now our Sunday Schools are conscious of its push and are so recasting the ideals of work that our schools are happily and steadily becoming centres of life and interest. Marion Lawrance puts the wisdom of an attractively ordered school in happy phrase :—"Have a good meal ready when you ring the bell."

3. Whatever scheme of "Recruiting" may be adopted, care should be taken to avoid any approach to poaching upon the preserves of others. It is unwise to accept a scholar from another school until the authority of that school has been consulted on the reasons given for the turn-over. If it happen that a given school is particularly liberal in the matter of prizes, treats, auxiliary agencies, then probably, in the course of the year, there will be a considerable number seeking admission who at the time are on the roll of some neighbouring school. This should be discouraged. "Do unto one another as ye would that they should do to you" is the rule that governs the case. Care should also be exercised in cases in which it has been necessary to "discipline" a scholar ; to receive such a transfer without enquiry weakens the influence of a brother

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superintendent and impairs the morale of the school that accepts the delinquent.

4. An overcrowded school is a greater evil than one but half full. If there be accommodation for say five hundred scholars in all Departments, it is a serious blunder to accept six hundred. This is true of each several department. Good work can be done with a given number; let that number be exceeded and the greater the excess the poorer the work. Crowding means discomfort, disorder, noise and headache. But to many a Superintendent the very suggestion of a waiting list is deep-dyed heresy. Yet the fact is that the "Waiting List" would give the school a local reputation and do much to keep it full. Mankind is always eager for that which it cannot get.

5. A certain amount of the outflow can be stopped by the institution of an effective system of Visitation. This is a vital matter and should be dealt with at greater length than is possible within the limits imposed upon this chapter. If a business man neglected his constituency as we neglect ours, he would speedily be familiar with the proceedings of the Bankruptcy Court. A really alert Secretary will devise or adopt some method by which every scholar is communicated with during the week that follows his absence. Methods vary. He can organise "The Superintendent's Messengers," or "The Class Scouts." He can

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make use of the little card, "We have missed you," or he can give the name and address to the teacher, who, if he be keenly interested in his class, will find some way of getting in touch with the absentee. The absurd method of waiting for three successive absences before taking action is too absurd to treat seriously.

6. Whatever may be the method of special "Recruiting" it will of necessity involve a certain amount of printing. See that the printer employed knows how to turn out good and attractive stuff. As little matter as is absolutely necessary; well-set; clear type; good paper, and the printing will pay for itself. Poor paper—cheap handbills—are always money thrown away. Ingenuity in wording is good. In this Mr. Marion Lawrance was an adept and in his book he gives samples which are suggestive, though they might need modifying if used in conservative Britain.

All that has been said has its direct bearing upon our School Enrolment, though it has not dealt specifically with various schemes for "Recruiting" that have been found effective in different districts.

(a) The most elaborate, though at the same time the most desirable because of its wise, thorough and definitely spiritual attack upon an entire town or neighbourhood, is that which has been worked in certain of the suburban districts of

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London. It has begun with a conference of the clergy and ministry of the locality with the Superintendents of the Sunday Schools. This has been given mainly to prayer and consultation ; it has had the happy effect of removing latent prejudice and paving the way for co-operative effort. The next step has been for each Church to discover a number of men and women who were prepared to take part in a serious house-to-house canvass of the district. A street, or a part of a street, was assigned to two visitors—for it was found wiser to work in couples than singly—and the Secretaries with the aid of a local directory prepared the lists. A letter was printed giving the names of all the Sunday Schools in the district, and suggesting that if, in the home visited, there were children or young folk who were not attending a school they should join one or the other. It was also stated that the visitors would make a second call for a reply within a given time. Of course here and there the visitors were not welcome and their experience was the reverse of encouraging. These were rare exceptions and the reports generally told of a kindly, courteous reception. When the time for the return visit came some houses had been struck out of the list. It was only an offence to suggest that Jewish parents should send their children to a Christian Sunday School, or that Roman Catholics would hand their

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offspring over to the tender mercies of heretical Protestants. With such exceptions the second call was made. Each pair of visitors had now a card on which to tabulate the response. If favourable—and in a surprising number of instances it was favourable—the school selected was noted and the names and ages of the children entered. Then the cards were sorted and sent to the secretaries of the various schools. The results were such that some schools received a large increase and all had the joy of welcoming some additions. This is a method that calls for consecrated enthusiasm and for a determination to see the thing through. It pays better than any other scheme of which we have heard.

(b) One London Superintendent devised a scheme by which a number of picked boys and girls were enrolled as "Recruiting Sergeants." They were instructed to tackle any and every one of suitable age who they knew were not attending a Sunday School. Cards were provided and reports given week by week for about six Sundays. In certain places this has proved to be a successful method, but it is open to objection. A spirit of competition is evoked that has occasionally led to "sheep stealing," for which the school authorities, though innocent, have been blamed. Further, it lacks dignity; parents are apt to resent what they regard as interference

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with their domestic affairs by other people's children. It may also tend to develop the unhappy spirit of self-righteousness on the part of the successful juvenile canvasser. The plan has now and again been carried further. The "Recruiters" have been organised into bands—"The Reds" and "The Blues"—and the results have been posted in the school from week to week. Some form of reward—generally a tea—has been given to the winning band, to the disappointment of the rest. Possibly numbers may have increased, but the method of setting group against group in this way is not to be commended.

(c) A better plan is that of "The Look-out Scouts." It does not follow that those who bear this name are either "Scouts" or "Girl Guides" in the sense which the words usually bear. A number of scholars—and they should not be all of one sex—are chosen and to each one street, or, if it be of great length, certain numbers in the street, are allotted. The instructions are that every week they shall walk their "beat" and watch for any empty houses, giving immediate information to the Secretary or Superintendent whenever a new tenant takes possession. This enables an early call to be made and an invitation given. It will be noted that the "Scouts" do not personally call or invite; they give information that puts the school authorities on the right track.

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A variant of this scheme is for the teachers to act as the Scouts, in which case they undertake the visit and give the invitation. It is a good scheme, and, if scholars can be found who are reliable and keen, it has a good effect upon them. Dr. Ritchie has often said: "To retain your Senior Scholars, give them work to do." This is work that any mid-teen boy or girl can well undertake.

(d) This is an age when "Publicity" is urged upon the business world. There are those who advocate judicious "Publicity" on behalf of the Sunday School, and argue that it is a most effective means of continuous, if silent "Recruiting." Good and attractive posters, varied from time to time, and showing ingenuity in the wording, are advocated. Here is one that is taken from Mr. Marion Lawrance's well-known book:

### "FIFTY-TWO TIMES A YEAR.

As regularly as Sunday comes, a cheery welcome awaits you at the Brunswick Sunday School. We have Departments and Classes for all ages. One is exclusively for *Men*. We try by spirited vocal and orchestral music, short earnest prayers, faithful Bible Study, to please, interest and profit all who come among us.

PLEASE COME NEXT SUNDAY."



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The phrasing of the above is slightly altered, but the idea is the same. In some towns, especially in the industrial north, this would be worth trying. But, watch the printer!

These are methods of "Recruiting" that have been tried and found to answer in a greater or less degree. The one thing to bear in mind is never to be content with a dwindling school. If a school is going down in numbers there is some reason for it. It is no use simply to mourn and moan. That is a sign of incapacity. Find out the cause. If it be in the Method of the School, change the Method; if it be the result of bad registration and lack of business-like enrolment and visitation, change that. If necessary, change the official through whose neglect such a condition has come to pass. Never sacrifice the welfare of the school for the sake of the individual. The Official exists for the School, and not the School for the Official. Whatever method you may adopt to improve your numbers, let it be holy in its aim and guided by prayer.

## CHAPTER XVII

### The Study of Scientific Sunday School Methods

By EDMUND W. SARA, M.A.

A VICAR in a certain Liverpool parish, some little time ago, objected to his teachers attending classes on method in teaching, because he said "they should be taught to teach by the Holy Spirit." Many would reverence much which urged the Vicar to feel and act as he did, while yet, at the same time, realising that he was particularly blind to the real meaning of the words which he used.

Every Sunday School worker to-day, who is aware that he is called to be an instrument in God's hands, knows full well that he will never teach unless he is first taught by the Holy Spirit. The question which we must ask is—Does this mean that we must turn aside from all the work of the modern educationalist and go on using methods which are condemned and discarded in the teaching of every secular subject?

All right method in teaching is based on what we know and understand of God's Laws

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shown in the developing and working of mind. Psychology has shown us something of these laws, and surely to work in accordance with them is to work in accordance with the will of God. If this is so, then to use right methods is to work spiritually in the truest sense, and we may take it that the educationalist who works with reverence and humility to discover more of God's laws of mind is most certainly being taught by the Holy Spirit. In fact the teacher who refuses such light is refusing the guidance which God would give him.

There is, however, a real danger in the study of methods in religious education. It is that we may attempt to look upon a method as an end in itself. Two very different types of people are inclined to do this. There is first of all the old-fashioned teacher who refuses to face modern knowledge and clings to some old method simply because it is old. For example, we are discovering that to ask the children to read the Bible verse by verse round the class is not the best method of helping them to understand and to appreciate the Scriptures; but when some teachers are shown this they refuse to give up their old method, either because their minds have become so fixed that they are incapable of seeing a new point of view, or simply, sometimes, because this is the method which has been used for generations. To them

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method has become an end in itself. On the other hand, there is the person who is always inclined to grasp at anything which is new, simply because it is new, and hence, in education, we get teachers using methods which they do not really understand and which have not been fully proved by patient experience. The right attitude is that of the open mind. Surely all those who are called by God to this work will always be striving for further knowledge, always ready to examine both the old and the new in the light of this further knowledge, and, if need be, to leave the old behind and to adventure along new paths.

## **I. MODERN PSYCHOLOGY AND THE AIM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.**

The aim which we set before ourselves in religious education is of the first importance. If one questions a number of people upon the aims which they have adopted, it is generally found that they are such that only one side of human personality is being emphasised.

In the first place, there are those who lay the emphasis upon the intellectual side of their work. For example, some take the teaching of the Bible as their aim. In itself this is a partial aim, because the mere teaching of the Bible may not be religious education at all, but also it is usually

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found that there is an out-worn psychological conception influencing the teacher's thinking. The mind is looked upon as a store-house, or merely as a mass of associated ideas, with the result that an effort is made to "cram" the child with facts presented in logical order, with no thought of the emotional effect of such methods. One result of such Bible teaching is the irreligion of to-day. Modern psychology teaches us of the mind as a living organism—an organism which will respond to right method, but which is injured by wrong. This fact also revolutionises our ideas of learning by heart and urges us to discard entirely much of the old catechism method.

It is quite obvious that to teach of God's revelation of Himself in Scripture is a large part of our task, but in order to teach the child of God, and not only *about* God, we must also work through the emotions, and this especially applies to the early years when much intellectual training is difficult. The work of an infant school was once defined as an effort to "bring about the right emotional relationship between the child and his God." If, for example, the child is told certain stories from the Old Testament, which give him a wrong idea of God, which make him, in a wrong sense, afraid of God, then we are making it difficult for him, in later

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years, to feel towards God as a man should feel towards a Father of Infinite Love.

There is a second type of aim which emphasises the training of character. Everyone would desire Sunday School Teaching to result in the growth of right character, but it is an indisputable fact that thousands of good moral lessons have had either the opposite effect, or none at all. Again it has been largely the result of wrong method. Psychology to-day would emphasise the power of personality on personality, and would teach that an unconscious influence is often of more importance than much direct teaching. Further, we realise that the method of moral instruction used—often devoid of the appeal of reason and of the attractiveness of love—failed because the teacher forgot, or did not know, that the will and the emotions cannot be separated.

A third type of aim—rarer than the others—concentrated upon the emotions. This, by itself, made mistakes as possible as the other cases. The danger is that a teacher thinking along these lines often attempted, and thanks to suggestion seemed to succeed in the attempt, to arouse in the child an emotional religious experience, of which he was really incapable, with the result that the forced flower withered at once when it was exposed to the winds of life. To-day it is far too common to find Bible Classes being given

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addresses which aim at doing little but to stir the emotions. No real lasting conversion is achieved by these methods.

Now, in each of these three types of aim the mistake has been to isolate one factor of human personality, with the result that the other neglected factors have often brought about a result very contrary to that desired by the teacher. Psychology to-day teaches quite clearly the unity of personality—we cannot influence one side without influencing the whole. Therefore our aim must be wide and inclusive. Its purpose must be to train and develop the whole personality, so that the child may be brought into a close touch with God, may know of God's revelation concerning Himself taught by the Church from Scripture, and may live the life of one who is dedicated whole-heartedly to the Christ.

## **2. LESSON STRUCTURE.**

Very much progress has been made in the art of lesson preparation. If one goes back to an old lesson-book one is struck by the amazing amount of good matter which it contains, but also by its aimless lack of form and method of presentation. In this the teaching of religious truth does not differ from other branches of education. In every case the teacher was apt to

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consider rather the logical development of his subject matter, than the psychological nature of the child whom he taught. The necessity of arousing interest was not sufficiently recognised. Deduction was the method rather than that of induction, and the applications of lessons were often forced and divorced from reality.

There was a period when a revolt from these older methods of lesson preparation was shown in the effort to adapt the formal Herbartian steps to Sunday School lessons. An attempt was made to provide every lesson with an introduction, a presentation, an association, a generalisation and an application. This was a decided advance, because at last it was realised that teaching should, in the main, be inductive and that children should be led to make their own generalisations. A truth which one discovers, a law of life which one arrives at by oneself, an enthusiasm which is personal, are all of more value than truths laid down dogmatically by authority, than laws misunderstood and which claim no allegiance, and than enthusiasm which one is directed to experience by a teacher.

We now realise that the Herbartian steps are impossible, although the principle which lies behind them is of vast importance. It is not always possible to come to a generalisation in



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each lesson because a generalisation can only be made when many facts have been considered, compared and classified. The general principle comes rather at the end of a group of lessons, when many instances have been compared and classified. It is also dangerous to think that we can find a general application for every lesson. Some lessons in a course will have a definitely intellectual aim, and it will spoil the course if we are straining facts to provide personal morals. The application will come when facts have been mastered and rules and laws have been discovered.

The Herbartian steps were also a help because they provided a framework upon which the inexperienced lesson writer might build. We still need some such framework, although one which avoids the difficulty of the five formal steps. The outline for the beginner could be as follows: Subject, Aim or Purpose, Introduction, Presentation or Treatment of the Subject, Conclusion.

(1) *The Introduction.* Teaching is of little value unless the teacher has secured attention from his class. Attention depends upon interest or appetite. This, in turn, depends upon both the child's natural tendencies or dispositions, and upon the systems of knowledge which he already possesses. Added to these facts, we also

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know how much memory depends upon the association of one idea with another, and upon the organisation of knowledge in our minds. There are, therefore, two purposes to be served by an introduction to a lesson. (1) We must attempt to gain attention through interest, and (2) we must recall to the child's mind the knowledge which he possesses which will interpret the new knowledge and which will, by association, help him to remember it. If we grasp the second purpose of an introduction, we shall be warned against the type which does gain interest, but which does not bring into the child's mind that which will help him to grasp the new idea, and which does not associate itself closely with the aim of the lesson. The first note to be struck should be the key note to the whole.

It is, of course, impossible, in this chapter, to illustrate definitely methods of applying these principles. Methods will vary with the grade of the child and the nature of the subject matter, and examples will be found in all good modern lesson books.

(2) *The Conclusion.* One has avoided calling this step of the lesson the application, because in the past we have been too ready to feel that every lesson needed, as its conclusion, a sermon which applied the lesson, or pointed the moral. Experience

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has proved that this is not the best way of applying a lesson because, too often, the moral has bored the children, and hence the application stage has had an exactly opposite result from that which we have desired. The less we preach in Sunday School the better. This must not lead the teacher to suppose that no application is necessary. It is not only necessary, but essential. Our teaching must influence conduct, and the thing to discover is "How best can we help the children to apply our teaching to their lives?" This will always be done when the child has been made to think for himself, to see the truth for himself, and when by story and example his emotions are so stirred that his will is strengthened to carry out the truth as he has seen it.

(3) *The Presentation, or Treatment of the Subject.* One has left the main central part of the lesson till last, because it must always occupy longer than the other stages.

In the first place, it will be well to emphasise what we have already said about deductive and inductive methods. In life we come naturally to general conclusions after much experience which leads us to compare, to classify, and ultimately to generalise. In our teaching this means that if we are to give children principles by which they may worship and live, we must teach them, as a

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rule, by a method of induction rather than by deduction. If this is true, then it follows that success or failure lies not necessarily in what the teacher does or does not do, but rather in the way in which he helps the child to discover and to think for himself. We shall teach more by helping our class to think for a few minutes, than by pouring out a flood of words, eloquent though they may be! It therefore follows that our presentation must be so planned that we do nothing for the class which it can do for itself, and tell it nothing which it can discover, unless the facts are so unimportant that it would be waste of time to search for them. This last remark is necessary because, now that the emphasis is laid on the child's part in the lesson, teachers are sometimes inclined to waste much valuable time in letting the children discover irrelevant and unimportant details which have obscured the real aim of acquiring some facts worth knowing, or of solving some problem which is worth solving.

With these principles in mind, the new matter may be presented in various ways: the story, narrative, discussion, research, or some form of self-teaching.

Space will not permit one to say anything of the story or of the use of the narrative, but it will be well to indicate the lines along which the other methods are developing.

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## 3. DISCUSSION.

Most teachers realise the value of questions asked by the teacher and by the children. It is good to develop this method a step further when it becomes a discussion and involves both teacher and class. This method is of especial value with older boys and girls, and with adolescents. The address method in the Bible Class is of very little value when compared with the discussion or Study Circle method, although one must always be careful not to seem to force an adolescent to talk about his personal religion before others. It is the most unhealthy thing he can do from a spiritual point of view, and may lead to a forced and unreal religion.

## 4. RESEARCH WORK AND SELF-TEACHING.

In teaching, it is what the child does that matters, hence research work and self-teaching.

Two developments of this principle may be noticed, the problem lesson, and quite free research work.

The problem lesson is well illustrated by the Rev. W. Hume Campbell, Principal of St. Christopher's College, Blackheath, in a book entitled *Lessons on the Church Catechism*. Each lesson turns upon a particular lesson problem, and they have been so planned as to secure the

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maximum of activity and co-operation on the part of the scholars. Whenever possible the class is to discover the facts which go to the solving of the problem by personal study of the Bible. The facts are to be discussed and conclusions written down in the scholar's note-book. Silent reading of the Bible is the method mainly encouraged. Naturally story-telling and narrative have their place as means of illustration to arouse emotion when necessary, but the emphasis is on silent reading and discussion.

The same principle has been carried a step further, in experiments along the lines of self-teaching. The two main differences are that in self-teaching the work is more individual and the emotional element is far less obvious.

In some self-teaching experiments<sup>1</sup> each child is provided with a "guide" which gives a series of questions to be answered after research on the part of the child, who is, of course, provided with a notebook in which the work is written. It is important that books, pictures and maps should be available, which the children should be allowed to use as freely as they desire. One of the difficulties at the moment is the dearth of suitable books for the children's use. In almost all classes which one has seen, working on these lines, the

<sup>1</sup> *Self Teaching in Religious Instruction* (as applied to Day School work). Hetty Lee (National Society).

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teacher was doing too little, and in many cases, utterly inadequate, if not actually wrong answers were initialled. This danger does not occur in the problem lesson method, because the assignments have to do with a definite lesson and are preceded and followed by discussion and narrative. One feels that self-teaching will probably develop in some way that combines the problem lesson with the principles of the experiments described above.

### **5. EXPRESSION WORK AND CLASS EXERCISES.**

No space is left in which to discuss the immediate expression of lessons in school, but the chapter would be hopelessly inadequate if no mention were made of the principle that almost every lesson demands some kind of handwork in which the lesson learnt may be expressed.

In self-teaching methods, the whole lesson is, in a sense, self-expression, but when one is using other methods and with grades to which self-teaching hardly applies, expression work is necessary. It may be drawing in the Infant School, or the writing of answers to questions with older children, but the principle is the same. The application of a lesson is often best made by means of such expression work.

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Nothing has been said about the use of pictures, models, blackboards, and such helps to right method, but one hopes enough has been said to indicate the lines along which we, the Servants of God, endeavour to work, in accordance with His laws of mind, which are being unfolded before us by the light of His Holy Spirit.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### The Future Development of the Sunday School

By A. J. G. SEATON, B.D.

PROPHECY is a dangerous business. Many factors, at present unforeseen, will modify the future development of our work. There is no doubt that detrimental influences, like the spread of Sunday games, will have to be dealt with. Events powerful for good or ill, such as Sunday Broadcasting for children, will appear from time to time. New educational methods, revivals of religious interest, and other important and helpful changes will occur. Even the son of a prophet—still less the present writer—dare not try to describe the Sunday School of twenty years hence.

All that may be attempted in this chapter, the reader, who has followed the book so far, could write for himself. We can only hope to visualise some of the changes which will take place if the principles set forth in the previous chapters are allowed to work out to their full conclusions. Still, even so, this chapter may serve as a summary

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of things which have gone before in the book. Repetition is unavoidable, but since the writer—unlike the reader—has not the privilege of knowing what the other contributors have said, his words may be taken as independent evidence. They only apply, of course, to conditions in Great Britain.

Perhaps the most important and fundamental improvement, which is even now rapidly taking place, is the alteration of the whole attitude of the Christian Church to religious education. Originally the Churches concerned themselves primarily with adults, and largely left the children to parental or casual care, which was all too often lacking. For more than a century now the Christian education of children has been increasingly regarded as an obligation upon the Church. But the day is at last dawning when it will be looked upon as the Church's *first* obligation. The work of evangelising the present generation of adults is exceedingly urgent, but more urgent is the task of training the next generation so that it never goes astray. Preventive and rescue work must still go on side by side, but, though the former may make the latter unnecessary, the reverse can never be the case. Surely, then, the training of youth must come first in all our programmes.

The Sunday School of the future will give the widest possible significance to the word "training."

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It will realise, as many of our schools already do, that mental and physical fitness contribute to moral fitness. It will not be satisfied unless proper provision exists for the cultivation of the body, mind and spirit of every scholar. In large centres of population there are many facilities for physical and mental training provided by the local authorities. There is no need for the Sunday School to duplicate these, but there is much room for co-operation. Some schools have realised that the last Education Act gave them considerable powers to arrange classes at the public cost. That scheme should be continued more widely. But even in large centres there are some types of training which only the school itself can provide, as, for instance, the kind of study-circle and debating-club which makes for the growth of the workers, leaders, speakers and preachers of to-morrow. In more remote areas very little is done for young people unless the Sunday School undertakes the task. For younger children no public training on wider lines is likely to be available yet. But we may reasonably hope that the Sunday-School-which-is-to-be will consider a Scout Troop, or some similar organisation both for boys and girls, as essential as a Superintendent.

If, as suggested above, the Churches really do set the child in the midst, and regard his Christian

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training as their first duty, the change will be reflected in buildings and plant. To-day there are thousands of handsome church buildings, perfectly appointed for the weekly worship of God by adults, but possessing miserably inadequate accommodation for work among the young. There can be no doubt that this proportion indicates the relative importance of things in many minds even yet. Hundreds of enlightened and enthusiastic workers are hampered by their cramped premises. Perhaps some day church building committees will instruct their architects to draw plans for a college of Christian education, comprising rooms for Graded Sunday School work and for every variety of week-day work for young people, with a College Chapel attached where young and old can join in public worship. Surely that would be the logical way of dealing with the matter if it be true that the training of youth is the Church's first business.

The problem of how to do good work in hopeless premises is most acute in the villages. Many a village school has no room beside the actual church itself and perhaps a vestry. Graded work is impossible. Is it too much to hope that the growth of the spirit of church unity may solve this problem for us? Instead of the putting up of two or three inadequate buildings to house rival denominations in the midst of small

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communities which really only need one church, united effort might afford much better accommodation. Where there already exist two or three small buildings in one village, a united school could use them for graded work and for valuable club work and educational work of all kinds on week-nights.

The last twenty years, which have seen such progress in the study of children, have witnessed the consequent progress of Sunday School methods. It is to be expected that the next twenty years will see these methods accepted and improved upon with accelerating readiness and in ever-widening circles. We need not detail them here for they are familiar to all readers of a book like this—or they will be before the reader reaches this point in its closing pages. We have learned, for instance, better than our predecessors did, the importance of the reaction of the external upon the internal, but we hope that our successors will have the opportunity and the wisdom to pay even more attention to it. We ought not to attempt to teach children that Christianity is a happy religion except in the happiest, brightest and most beautiful surroundings possible. We cannot expect them to believe us when we say that the familiar, dingy, funereal volume we call the Bible is the loveliest story-book in the world. They need beautiful, well-illustrated, well-bound,

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well-printed copies, which will compare with their favourite books. They ought to hear nothing but the best music, and sing the most beautiful words and tunes. Our fathers did wonderful work with poor methods, because they relied upon those divine and spiritual forces without which all our work is vain. But we hope that our children, while not neglecting these inner things one whit, will make great progress in improving those outer factors which contribute so much to "atmosphere."

Another instance of modern progress which demands a word, however familiar it may be, is the adoption of the principle of grading. It is of supreme urgency for religious training that children should be treated in groups in which they are all at the same religious stage. In no other way can they fully worship together, learn the truths which they can understand, and—most important of all—the truths to which they are ready to respond. Twenty years hence, graded methods, which are now far past the experimental stage, will surely be universally used as far as circumstances permit. It is in this direction that we may look for the most immediately beneficial improvements in the Sunday School work of the future, because so many other things, such as good teacher-training, depend upon it, and are comparatively easy when grading is once adopted.

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Every generation sees changes and improvements in the methods of actual teaching. It is to be feared that even yet much "teaching" is really lecturing or preaching. But we are improving. The work of Pestalozzi, Fröbel, Herbart and others is gradually filtering into our schools, and through the help of lesson-note writers, is influencing thousands of teachers without their knowledge. Perhaps the most outstanding change in our recent methods has been the revived emphasis upon story-telling. Thanks to that, together with the dawning of the ideas that a lesson must begin in a point of contact with the already known and interesting, and must end in some form of expression even if it is only verbal, there are far more teachers than ever before who teach a fairly well-constructed lesson. We may expect this type of improvement to go on increasingly, especially as more and more attention is paid to teacher-training.

The newest idea in the educational world which is likely to influence Sunday School work is the scheme of self-teaching. The method rests upon the well-known experience that we are most interested in, and have the best grip of, the truths which we discover for ourselves. Work is therefore assigned to scholars, to be done at their own discretion by a given date. Tutors and books are available at any time. The method was

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first worked out in 1920, in Dalton, U.S.A. It is now being tried in this country in many day schools, and, on the whole, has proved itself very successful. It is certain that, though there may be many modifications, and other methods used alongside, it has come to stay, and will enter into the fabric of educational method very largely in the future. Several Sunday Schools have tried self-teaching, and with good results. It does not interfere at all with the worship which is so important an influence upon the scholars, but takes the place of class-teaching. It certainly demands much from the teachers. We shall need much better-trained staffs before it can become widespread. Probably there are some purposes for which class-teaching will always be a better method. But self-teaching has the advantage of interest, of the freedom or co-operation of the children, of different rates of progress for different minds, and of the formation of habits of Bible-study which it is hoped may persist apart from the help of the Sunday School. The greatest theoretical objection to the scheme proves in experience to be its greatest practical advantage. It would naturally be thought that this method might well help scholars to master the facts of Christianity, but that the old pressure of personality and persuasion in class-teaching is more calculated to get them to act upon the truths



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learned. In practice, leaders of self-teaching classes find that they get opportunities for personal dealing with their scholars, which make heavy demands upon them, but which are far more effective for that very end—the winning of the child's response—than the mass-teaching methods ever could be. The whole idea is too new and untried to make further discussion of it here of any value, but that we shall hear more of it in the near future is a fairly safe prediction.

If there is one lesson above all others which the future ought to learn from the difficulties of the present, it is that school authorities must be as anxious about the training of leaders and teachers for coming days as they are about the education of the scholars of this generation. There is a widespread shortage of teachers of any kind, and an even greater shortage of well-trained teachers. The latter cannot be recruited haphazard ; there must be careful provision for their growth and training. This fact is in itself another strong reason for the adoption of graded methods of work. It is only by the transference of young adolescents to help in the Primary Department, their training there, and then their gradual working up through the school with the appropriate training in each department, that an unceasing and sufficient flow of well-equipped teachers can be maintained. No doubt great progress on these lines will follow the

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wider adoption of the grading principle. It is to be hoped that colleges, after the pattern of Westhill, will be multiplied, and regular evening courses arranged in large centres for those who cannot give their whole time to training. There is good reason to hope that this generation will see the introduction of more pedagogical subjects into the curricula of Theological Colleges. If ministers are able to take a more instructed interest in the work of Christian education, they will be better fitted to lead their congregations to put first things first in their programme of work. Already, in a few places, there have been appointed trained full-time and salaried workers to take charge of large schools. We are past the days when it was thought that a salary and a right motive were incompatible. As the breadth and importance of Sunday School work is recognised this arrangement will probably become more common.

It is greatly to be hoped that the future will speedily see the universal adoption of a wiser and truer view-point in teaching the Bible in Sunday Schools. Some folk have already gone so far as lightly to give the impression that the new is true because it is new. That is as mischievous as to assert that the old is true because it is old. We are getting nearer balanced judgments, and probably the children of future generations will be

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brought up in views of Scripture which will make it much more vivid and authoritative to them in later years, and far less full of difficulty. Perhaps the day may come when the Bible-work of State and Sunday Schools may be co-ordinated for elder children, the day school dealing with specific Bible passages on the side of literature and history and the Sunday School teaching the moral and religious significance of the same passages.

Another most urgent need of Sunday Schools, which a truer conception of their importance would emphasise, and which, conversely, would emphasise their true importance, is the necessity for realising their full aim. Their business is to educate young Christians ; to keep Christ's lambs within His fold until they are old and wise enough to stay there of their own accord ; to build character. Is this fully accomplished if it stops short of leading the young folk into the active membership of the Church ? Surely it is only in that fellowship that their characters can bloom most perfectly, and only in that co-operation that they can give their best service. It is very easy for good work to be done Sunday by Sunday in teaching unrelated Christian lessons. But there is required a more statesmanlike view. The school of the days to come must keep track of every child whose name appears on the Cradle Roll, and plan and toil and pray until that child—as far as the

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influence of the School can go—is a decided follower of Jesus, and a member and worker in His Church.

*As far as the influence of the school can go.* That clause introduces the last, but not the least important matter that there is room to mention. How little influence has the School compared with the home! That little influence is glorious and great enough to demand our uttermost service, but ought not the School to influence the home as well? No one has the same *entrée* into a parent's heart as the man who is genuinely interested in his child. The Sunday School teacher has a considerable start of the minister or of anyone else in attempting to attach the parent of a scholar to the Church. That fact is now being realised, and many and various means of enlisting the interest and co-operation of the parents are being tried. There will certainly be a great increase of this kind of service in coming days. Parents' Teas are fairly common, but more serious and systematic attempts to see that School and Home work together ought to mark the near future. Parents' Associations may be very successful and even Parents' Training Classes are frequently welcomed. But by visitation, and by every other possible method, the earnest school staff must make every effort to secure that its eager service is not neutralised but reinforced in

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that long and close environment of the child—his Home.

~~In a word,~~ the secret of all worthy future development lies in a new and deeper conception of the Sunday School's commission from Jesus. We are the Shepherds of His lambs. Both for His sake and theirs, nothing but the best we have in us is good enough—the greatest devotion, the best training, the finest plant, the wisest methods, the widest service and the humblest co-operation with Himself.

## Bibliography

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For a very full and suggestive Bibliography the reader is referred to

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If difficulty is experienced in obtaining any of the under-mentioned books through local booksellers, application should be made to:—

The Scottish National Sabbath School Union, 70, Bothwell Street, Glasgow,

or

The National Sunday School Union, Publishing Department, 57, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4.

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